

## I. Educational Planning

### Basic

Has a realistic view of his/her educational goals	EP-3 EP-10
Knows what a GED is and how to obtain one (if applicable)	EP-1

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**V-9 Finishing High School**


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**Objective:** The student will give at least two reasons why it is important or beneficial to complete high school.

**Comments:**

There are a lot of reasons why teenagers drop out of high school. Among these are the facts of pregnancy, poor grades, truancy, getting into trouble at school, boredom, seeing no relevance, and a simple lack of motivation. In this lesson, students are asked to respond to comments about completing high school.

**Introductory Activities:**

- a. Have students raise their hands if they intend to graduate from high school.
- b. Have students raise their hands if they have a close friend who has dropped out of high school.
- c. Have students raise their hands if they have a brother or sister who has already dropped out of high school.

**Activity:**

Students are to read the twelve statements on the worksheet "Finishing High School." They are to circle AGREE or DISAGREE to show how they feel about the statement. They are all opinion statements, so inform students that they will not be scored "right" or "wrong."

**Discussion:** It may be quite surprising to hear your students' views on completing high school. While some may be overly optimistic that they of course will complete high school (even with poor attendance, poor grades, low motivation), others – particularly those without support from home – may already be planning to quit. Without being judgmental or "preachy," listen to the students' comments and opinions. Extension activities may prove to be quite enlightening to some of these students!

1. What do you think is the main purpose of high school?
2. If someone close to you has dropped out of school, why would that make it more likely that an individual would also drop out of school? (**that's their model, may think of this as "freedom," the individual may already have a job**)
3. Do you think there is a connection between the amount of education a person has and his or her earning potential?
4. What other kinds of training are available after high school besides a regular four-year college program? (**two-year degrees, vocational schools, apprentice programs, etc.**)
5. Do you feel your parents value a high school education?
6. Why is a high school degree sometimes important to a parent or grandparent who never got one? (**they might feel as though they have missed an opportunity**)
7. What are some ways that classes and schools try to make learning more relevant? (**offer on-the-job programs, work/study, etc.**)
8. Do you know of anyone who has completed the GED program? What comments did this person have about the program?

EP-3

9. If someone has quit high school, how easy do you think it would be to return – especially after having a baby or working for awhile? (**probably difficult – new responsibilities, less time, more stresses**)
10. What advice would you give to someone who was struggling in high school, but still wanted to stay in and try to finish? (**get help – talk to a counselor, teachers, get tutoring, etc.**)

**Extension Activities:**

1. If possible, have a counselor come in to explain the GED (equivalency) program. Some students may think this is an easy way to get through high school. Find out about the history of the program (military program during World War II), the restrictions, time involved, level of material, and commitment of time that is necessary to complete the program.
2. Have students research the earning potential of students with and without high school degrees.
3. Have students find out reasons why teenagers drop out of high school. How many plan to return? How many actually return?
4. Invite speakers to your class who have made the decision (or felt it was necessary) to drop out of high school. Do they regret the decision? What factors were involved in their life at the time? What are they doing today?

**Evaluation:**

- a. List at least two reasons why it is beneficial to complete high school.
- b. List at least two reasons why teenagers may choose to drop out of high school.
- c. Write a paragraph explaining your intentions about finishing high school.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Finishing High School

**Directions:** Complete the following survey by expressing your opinions and reactions to the following statements about high school. Circle *agree* or *disagree* after each statement.



- |  |       |          |
|--|-------|----------|
| 1. It is important to have a high school diploma.  | Agree | Disagree |
| 2. You can still get a good job without a high school degree.  | Agree | Disagree |
| 3. High school is a waste of time if you don't plan to go to college.                                    | Agree | Disagree |
| 4. Most high school classes don't have any practical value.  | Agree | Disagree |
| 5. It is easy to get a GED (equivalency degree) if you drop out of school and then want to get a degree. | Agree | Disagree |
| 6. There are ways to get help if you want to finish high school.   | Agree | Disagree |
| 7. A lot of my friends either have quit school or intend to quit high school.                            | Agree | Disagree |
| 8. One or both of my parents did not finish high school.   | Agree | Disagree |
| 9. I have a brother or sister who quit school.   | Agree | Disagree |
| 10. I would consider leaving high school, but only if I had a job already lined up.                      | Agree | Disagree |
| 11. The only reason I am in high school is because of the activities and my friends.                     | Agree | Disagree |
| 12. If you really want to get a high school diploma, you will find a way.                                | Agree | Disagree |

### Thinking About Dropping Out?

Approximately 3,300 young people drop out of school every day in the United States. If you've dropped out or are thinking about it, consider these facts:

- 3.8 million persons ages 16-24 were high school dropouts in 1994; of these, 362,000 were ages 16-17.
- During 1994, 498,000 GED credentials were issued, with 35,000 going to persons under age 19.
- Reasons often given for leaving school include not liking school, failing grades, conflicts with teachers, suspension or expulsion, needing a job, and family-related reasons (e.g., pregnancy, etc.).
- The unemployment rate in 1995 among dropouts was 20%, compared to 12% for those who finished high school.

Now consider these average annual salaries (1994 figures):

**Less than a ninth grade education:**

males \$17,532  
females \$12,430

**Some high school but no diploma:**

males \$22,048  
females \$15,133

**High school diploma or GED:**

males \$28,937  
females \$20,373

**Two-year college degree:**

males \$32,279  
females \$23,514

**Four-year college degree:**

males \$43,663  
females \$31,741

Regardless of your reason for leaving or wanting to leave school, there may be a program for teenagers in your same situation. You'll find continuing education programs for teen parents, substance abusers, working teens, and those with poor academic records. Contact a school counselor or district office for information about these opportunities.

Sources: Digest of Education Statistics 1996, U.S. Department of Education; Statistical Abstract of the United States 1996

# **6 EASY STEPS TO GETTING YOUR GED!!**

## **STEP 1: FIND A PREP CENTER**

We can help you find local prep classes,  
and most of them are free.

Before you take the GED Test, it's best to attend classes.

Enter your zip code above or call our helpful GED center toll free at 1-877-38-YOURGED to find classes in your neighborhood.

## **STEP 2: REGISTER FOR PREP**

Find the classes that are right for you.

Once you find your local GED Test prep classes, you'll need to register. The process varies from place to place, but when you go, you'll probably be asked to take a placement test. Don't worry! This test is just used to find out which classes are right for you. Everyone takes it and it's nothing to stress out about. When it's done, you'll be one step closer to earning your GED Diploma.

## **STEP 3: GO TO CLASS AND STUDY**

You can't pass without class.

It may seem obvious, but if you want to earn your GED Diploma, you have to put in the time and effort. It's not going to be easy. You might have to juggle work, kids and other responsibilities with class and studying. Just remember — almost everyone who has earned a GED Diploma (over 17 million people) had to go through the same thing. You can do it. It will be more than worth it.

## **STEP 4: TAKE PRACTICE TESTS**

Practice makes perfect.

Before you take the real GED Tests, it's a good idea to practice. When the time is right, your teachers will help you take some practice tests so you know what to expect for the real thing.