



Course Planning Guide

A 4-Year High School Roadmap for Academic Confidence

This Course Planning Guide was created by Compass College Advisory to help you reflect, plan, and take ownership of your high school academic journey.

Inside, you'll find:

- A chart to map out all four years of high school coursework
- Guidance on how to think about your five core subjects
- Insight into AP, Honors, and Dual Credit options
- Planning prompts to help you reflect and revise
- Tips to make smart, balanced decisions that support your goals

Use this guide as a living document. Revisit it each semester to see your progress, adjust your path, and celebrate how far you've come.

We help families navigate the college admissions process with grace and ease.

Compass College Advisory

Your College. Your Home

compasscollegeadvisory@gmail.com

www.compasscollegeadvisory.com



How to Choose Your Courses

Begin your planning with the five core subjects: English, Math, Science, Social Studies, and World Language. These areas form the foundation of your academic profile and are most closely evaluated by colleges and scholarship committees.

Select courses that align with your future interests, whether those relate to college majors, career paths, or areas of curiosity you wish to explore further. Each course should have a clear purpose—whether that purpose is building a critical skill, diving into a passion, or stepping outside your comfort zone.

A few guiding tips:

- Aim for academic balance. Your schedule should challenge you while still allowing space for rest, extracurriculars, and personal growth.
- Use electives to expand your perspective. These classes offer an opportunity to explore creative outlets, deepen your interests, or develop career-related skills.
- Seek advice when needed. Talk to your Compass advisor, school counselor, or a trusted teacher about how your course decisions support your larger academic story.

The Five Core Classes

Each year, your course selections should reflect thoughtful engagement with the following academic areas:

English: A four-year sequence is expected by all colleges. Strong reading, writing, and communication skills are essential regardless of major.

Math: Most colleges require a minimum of three years, but four years is often preferred. Aim for progression through Algebra, Geometry, and higher-level courses such as Pre-Calculus, Statistics, or Calculus.

Science: Plan to take at least three lab sciences, such as Biology, Chemistry, and Physics. A fourth year is especially important for students considering majors in health, engineering, or the sciences.

Social Studies: Include foundational courses like U.S. History and Government/Economics. Many colleges also expect courses in World History or other social science electives.

World Language: Whenever possible, take the same language for four consecutive years. Some colleges require only two or three years, **but continued study through senior year signals commitment**, global interest, and strong study habits.

Advanced, Honors, and College-Level Courses

Honors, AP, IB, and Dual Credit courses demonstrate your willingness to take on academic challenges. These courses are weighted more heavily in many GPA calculations and are often used as indicators of college readiness.

However, these advanced options should be selected carefully. It is better to excel in a regular course than to struggle in one that is too advanced. Choose rigorous courses in subjects you enjoy or intend to pursue in college. Use your success in those areas to build an academic identity that reflects your strengths and interests.

Planning Reflections

Consider the following questions each year as you review and plan your schedule:

- What class did you enjoy the most this year, and why?
- Which subject challenged you the most? How did you respond?
- Do your course choices reflect your interests and potential major?
- Are there areas where you want to increase or reduce academic rigor?
- Have you taken full advantage of the academic opportunities available to you?

High School Course Planning Tracker

Subject Area	9th Grade	Grade	10th Grade	Grade	11th Grade	Grade	12th Grade	Grade	Reflection notes
English									
Math									
Science									
Social studies									
World Language									
PE/ Health									
Elective 1									
Elective 2									
Extra Courses									

