

HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA QUESTIONS

Q. What does a homeschool diploma mean?

A. The diploma is a convenient, physical representation of the fact that the work your student has done meets your standards for graduation. If you were asked to verify that fact, you would show the records you have kept of their work, in other words, your student's transcript. We recommend that you prepare a transcript for your student as it is what gives validity to the diploma you have issued.

Q. What records do I need to keep for my high school student?

A. Record keeping is important during the high school years. In the 9th grade, begin keeping accurate records of the courses your child takes, the textbooks and other resources that were used, provide a brief description of the contents of the course, the methods of evaluation, samples of papers and test, and the name of the instructor (this could be the parents, online instructor or a tutor). It is also a good idea to keep a separate reading list of the books your child has read.

Q. What is a high school transcript and why do I need one?

A. Transcripts are records of the courses that your child has completed in high school, the credits earned for each course and the final grade of that course. Transcripts also include a grade point average (GPA). The GPA is calculated by taking the number of grade points a student earned divided by the total number of credits taken.

Q. Can I make my own diploma and who would sign it?

A. Yes, the parent can make their own diploma. When creating a high school diploma, include the following items; state that the diploma is a high school diploma, state the name of the student, include wording that the student finished the program of secondary education that was required of him/her, enter the signature of the person who knows that the student finished the program and also the date it was issued or signed. The diploma may be signed by the person who exercised authority over the student's high school program and who has verified that the student successfully completed the program (the parent is generally the appropriate person to sign the diploma).

Q. What is accreditation and to whom does it matter?

A. The homeschool high school diploma is not accredited. Accreditation is a set of rigorous protocols and research based processes for evaluating an institution's organizational effectiveness, the programs, the cultural context, the community of stakeholders – to determine how well the parts work together to meet the needs of students. This allows the accrediting agencies to guarantee that a credit used by one school in the group will be equivalent to and accepted by other schools in the same group. The standards you have set for educating your child are not the same as those of any other school, and you have no reason to try to prove that they are.

Q. Will the diploma I issue be accepted anywhere?

A. Job applications usually have a box to check if the applicant has a high school diploma and a line on which to write the name of the school. If your student has done the work, there is no reason that they should not be able to say "Yes" and if you have supervised their education, you could be doing them a disservice if you did not issue them a diploma. Of course, there is no guarantee that their diploma will be accepted by everyone. There may arise a situation where someone may not feel comfortable with the homeschool diploma and you may decide to offer and provide a copy of the transcript or submit to a test that they may require.

Note: For college-bound students a homeschool diploma is usually not an issue, because the student's transcripts and test scores tell admissions officers a great deal about the quality of their education. In fact, the presence of a diploma in the case of a homeschooled student may actually be a detractor if it is viewed as the sum total of the student's education. Transcripts, portfolios, student essays and recommendations which demonstrate qualities such as creativity, leadership, initiative or other unique, homeschool-strengthened traits prove the worth of the homeschool diploma, especially if test scores back up the student's abilities in "measurable" academic areas.