

Franklin Jr./Sr High School Reading Article

High School Is Just Too Easy Students Say (NBC News)

Reading Strategy for the Article: Students will take turns reading aloud. Mark the text and write in the margins as you read.

1130L

Instructions: COMPLETE ALL QUESTIONS AND WRITE NOTES in the margin box. This requires reading of the article more than once.

Step 1: Skim the article using these symbols as you read:

(+) agree, (-) disagree, (*) important, (!) surprising, (?) wondering

Step 2: Number the paragraphs. **Read** the article **carefully** and **make notes in the margin**.

Notes should include:

- Comments that show that you **understand** the article. A summary or statement of the main idea of important sections may serve this purpose.
- Questions you have that show what you are **wondering** about as you read
- Notes that differentiate between **fact** and **opinion**.
- Observations about how the **writer's strategies** (organization, word choice, perspective, support) and choices affect the article.

Step 3: A final quick read noting anything you may have missed during the first two reads.

Your margin notes will be assessed by your teacher along with your answers to the questions.

As they head back to classes in the next few weeks, American high school students reject the idea that they are being overburdened by homework and expectations, complaining that school isn't challenging enough. The findings come in two recent surveys by the National Governors Association and the Horatio Alger Association, a nonprofit education group. Combined, the surveys polled more than 11,000 high school students.

By overwhelming majorities, students said they would work harder at their studies if more was expected from them — 65 percent in the governors' poll and 88 percent in the Alger poll. The gap between the two results may reflect differences in how the surveys were conducted and worded. The governors association set up a Web site, where more than 10,000 students ages 16 to 18 answered questions during the past three months. The Alger poll was a more traditional telephone survey of 1,005 students ages 13 to 19 by Peter D. Hart Research Associates, which also conducts polling for NBC News.

At odds with conventional wisdom

The findings come as some education activists have started warning that strict federally imposed standards, such as the "No Child Left Behind" initiative, have piled American teenagers with too much homework and pressure to succeed on standardized tests. In a report last year, the Carrboro-Chapel Hill School District in North Carolina identified "pressure to perform" as a significant deterrent to school achievement. "High school is not a mini-university," the report said. But the new surveys suggest that students themselves disagree.

Notes on my thoughts, reactions and questions as I read.

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Only 31 percent said in the Alger poll that expectations at their schools were high or that they were being significantly challenged. The governors' poll posed the question a different way; more than 3 in 5 students — 62 percent — said their schools had done a bad or only fair job of “holding my attention.”

Specifically, 92 percent in the Alger report said they wanted more real-world experience in the curriculum, while most endorsed standardized testing. And they said they wished they had better and earlier guidance about their futures from teachers and counselors.

“More than ever before, students set a high bar for themselves and they expect their high schools to meet the same criteria,” the Alger Association said. “Just as they expect more from themselves, students want their high schools to expect more from them as well.”

Even more striking, when the governors asked high schoolers how valuable their senior year was, half said it was a “waste of time,” or could be “much more meaningful,” and more than a third said their classes were not adequately preparing them for college.

At its annual meeting last month, the National Governors Association announced an agreement to standardize data collection on dropout rates across the states and to adopt uniform criteria for graduating.

“Students care a great deal about making high school better,” Virginia Gov. Mark Warner, who was head of the governors association when the survey closed last month, said in a statement. “We know we can’t make high school more meaningful without input from the experts.”

Other findings

The National Governors Association survey questioned 10,378 students who visited the [Rate Your Future](#) Web site from May through mid-July. The Horatio Alger Association questioned 1,005 students by telephone in May as part of its annual State of Our Nation’s Youth report, which was released last week; it reported a margin of sampling error of 3 percentage points.

As part of its larger report, the Alger Association also found that:

- 33 percent of students don’t think schools are doing enough to prevent bullying, and 24 percent think not enough is being done to keep weapons off campus.
- 42 percent think at least half of their classmates cheat on tests.
- 95 percent have some form of Internet access, with 7 percent getting their access only at school. By contrast, 54 percent say they read a newspaper at least a few times a week.
- 63 percent have cell phones; 62 percent of those students say they break school rules against using them fairly or very often. 42 percent think abuse of steroids is a fairly big or very big problem among high school athletes.

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Comprehension Questions— you may answer in phrases.

1. List three specific concerns about education that students had.
2. Describe the two different ways in which the data was collected in the surveys.
2. List evidence in the article that provides credibility that the article is based on researched data.
2. What does the word **deterrent** mean as used in the last paragraph on the first page?
3. What did Charrboro-Chapel Hill High School identify as a significant deterrent to school achievement?

Answer the following questions in one or more complete sentences.

1. The article suggests that the two studies support the conclusions in the article. What is the difference between “high expectations” and “holding my attention.” Do these mean the same thing? Support your answer.
2. Examine section of the article called “Other Findings” Circle the items that you believe could be applied to Franklin Junior Senior High.
3. In the space below, make a list of 5 changes that Franklin could make to better prepare you for life after high school.