

Dual Credit, CLEP & AP

Three ways to earn college credit while in high school.

Our family took advantage of all three at different times for different reasons.

Dual Credit: college courses taken to earn high school and college credit simultaneously.

CLEP & AP: two types of credit by examination.

Dual Credit

Homeschoolers: take classes at a college campus, usually LSC (several campuses).

For well-prepared high school students the benefits are:

- Lightens the load in college or saves time and money by graduating early.
(Caution: Check colleges your student may want to attend to see which courses transfer and HOW they transfer for specific degree plans.)
- Tuition is FREE - you only pay fees (~\$80/class); up to 3 classes per semester
- Helps student transition from homeschooling to college.
(rigor, environment (“unprotected”), procedure (syllabi, textbooks), office hours...etc.)
- Opportunity to enroll in Honors College while in High School – experience in Honors Project and formal Presentation Day.
- Outside accountability.
- Mom doesn’t have to teach all upper level high school subjects!!!

Warning: Grades for these courses will become part of your student’s permanent college record; think carefully before enrolling. (Currently, these grades contribute to the overall GPA and the science GPA for students applying to medical schools. Could be a great thing...could be a bad thing. You know your student’s capability and motivation. Decide wisely.)

Initial steps

- Keep transcript updated; you will need it for Dual Credit admission.
- Attend one of LSC’s “Open Houses” for Homeschoolers, not necessary, but a good way to get an overview of the program. (I think March 28 or 30, 10:00 am - noon. See link below.)
- Check admission test requirements. <http://www.lonestar.edu/dualcredit-tsi.htm>
Will your student need to take the TSI? If so, prepare as needed; take only portions ready for. (TSI review sessions available. Test Prep tips: <http://sites.austincc.edu/tsiprep/>)
- Need a higher level math placement test? <http://www.lonestar.edu/placement-testing-info.htm>
- Meet with the Dual Credit Advisor at the campus your student will be taking classes.
- Students 16yr or younger must have a parent on campus while student is in class.

Choosing Classes

- Ideal situation—work from the degree plan for the university the student plans to attend.
- Choose classes that transfer as specific courses in the degree plan. (Be careful, many merely transfer as electives.) The Texas Common Course Numbering System (tccns.org) is helpful. Classes must also count toward student’s High School requirements. (Transcript with proposed classes often fulfills this requirement.)
- Be cautious of online classes – little teacher interaction.

Enrollment & Open House details: <http://www.lonestar.edu/TomballHomeSchool.htm>

** Even one or two Dual Credit classes can help prepare students for college. **

CLEP & AP Exams

Both put out by the College Board.

Purpose

- Earn college credit
- Demonstrate proficiency to colleges and scholarship organizations

What do colleges and universities do with the scores?

- Check each institutions website to find out specifics.
- Colleges and universities decide which exams/scores they will accept and if they give course credit or merely advance student to a higher level course.
- No college grades given, only credit or advanced course placement.

AP (Advanced Placement)

- Designed for students to do college level work while in high school and receive college credit if demonstrate proficiency on exam.
- More universally accepted by colleges, public and private
- Courses offered to prepare for the exam (most for homeschoolers are online; more offerings every year by organizations such as PA Homeschoolers, HSLDA)
- Pencil and paper exams 3 hours, multiple choice and “free response” (written) sections— even for math & science
- Given once a year in the first two weeks of May at local high schools; parent must make arrangements with the school officials by March 15; Payment made to school (around \$85)
- Scores (1-5) usually available in July

<http://professionals.collegeboard.com/testing/ap/scores/prepare/homeschool>

CLEP (College Level Examination Program)

- Designed to test mastery of college-level material acquired in any way — academic instruction, independent study, internships, work, etc.
- Not accepted by as many colleges
- No courses geared to exams, but as with AP, study books available
- Easier, 90 minute computer-based exams, many are multiple choice only
- Given on demand with 24-48 hours notice at Lone Star College; register by phone to reserve spot in testing center (pay \$15 center fee on campus), register and pay for exam online (\$80)
- Scores (20-80) available immediately after testing
- May be able to retake after 3 or 6 months. Check the College Board website.

Details: <https://clep.collegeboard.org> or [Basic CLEP flyer](#).

Transcripts

What: Academic snapshot including standardized test scores and all high school level courses with grades. **MUST BE TRULY HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL!**

When:

- Make 4 year high school plan when planning 6th or 7th grade—in pencil.
- Make transcript template at the same time.
- These will be working documents you will update each semester/year as needed.
- This may seem early, but you need to have the end goal for your child in mind, then work backwards to make sure your student will end up with all of the courses he/she will need for college (or whatever he/she will do after high school.)
- Reevaluate your 4 year plan each year.
- Update transcript whenever high school level courses are completed.
- Easier to do early and keep updated as you go rather than having to start from scratch when you need one (even if need to make adjustments later for whatever reason).
- Plan to **do a few things that show capability other than grades given by mom.**

Why:

- Good student discount on car insurance
- Entrance to junior college for dual credit
- College application

How:

There are many **templates and samples** online. Here are a few:

HEP (Home Education Partnership)

- CD with 4-Year plan, transcript template, samples, instructions for calculating GPA and filling out transcript. (\$24.99) [HEP Bookstore](#)

Covenant College

- examples and instructions online

HSLDA

- examples and instructions online
- transcript subscription service (you input data and the transcript is generated for you)

HSLDA has quite a bit of information on its website for homeschooling high school, and you can sign up for their email newsletter: Homeschooling Thru High School.

Guidelines

- Your grades need to be backed up SAT/ACT scores. If your child's test scores are not good, yet you gave them all A's...there is a problem. Your transcript won't have credibility.
- If your child takes outside classes, use symbols to denote where they were taken. This shows that you were not the only one evaluating your student's work.
- Print transcript on high quality paper when applying to college.
- Keep a detailed record of special awards, service hours, extracurricular activities during high school. College applications often ask for detailed information that you don't want to have to come up with when deadlines are looming! You think you will remember...but you won't!