

## Drop a Gear

My advice to any incoming freshman follows a popular saying among manual car drivers: you have to “drop a gear and disappear” if you want to get the absolute most out of high school. When you need to get substantially more power out of a car, you can drop the gear your car is in. This allows you to accelerate much faster. The same can be said about high school: you get the most out of any experience when you put everything you have into it. You "drop a gear" by buckling down and getting ready for all high school has and you “disappear” by driving into all of the experiences you can. Take all of the classes that seem remotely interesting in order to leave your lane. These classes open many opportunities to face challenges that will help you grow in high school. Join every club you can to experience more applications of your learning. Make strong friendships where both parties are supported fully. These rules of the road can be the building blocks of a high school experience of which you are proud.

Taking challenging classes is necessary to get the most out of school. These are the ones that push you to extend your knowledge and experience. Without these classes, I doubt I would have as much experience and confidence as I do now. It can be surprising, but the most challenging classes are often the most rewarding and enjoyable. Taking all sorts of classes can help to get you out of the lane you’ve been in; it really helps you to stretch yourself mentally as well as physically. I’ve learned to program, make circuits, computer model, and many other unique skills for later in life from courses I “disappeared” into. I only learned these because I wasn’t afraid of the classes that demanded more. Branching out into more areas in high school allows you to discover a passion you didn’t know you had and help you to develop skills that are necessary later in life. The engineering classes I have taken inspired me to pursue a career in Aerospace Engineering.

Another amazing part of high school is all of the clubs available. Clubs are an experience imperative to your benefiting from high school. I joined math club and robotics my freshman year, with plans to join more soon after. These two clubs were really great social opportunities as well as opportunities to gain experience and compete. Competing is an excellent way to get gratification in school. It is also a really good way to get your name out into the community for scholarships. By “dropping a gear” into the clubs available, you enable yourself to receive all of the benefits of competing and of the community. Clubs in high school are an opportunity to discover passions, meet interesting people, and develop skills. I have learned the most and developed many skills from clubs. They offer the unique feeling of contentment with time while still being a satisfying activity.

Making strong friendships is vital to school as well. The best way to do this is to “drop a gear” and give it everything you have when making friends. If you hold back and don’t go all in for making new friends, the friendships you make will take much longer and won’t bear as much fruit. By going out of the lane you regularly travel, you can build a support system that helps you with homework as well as any other problems that may arise. You will find people you never thought you would be friends with as your best friends: the people you trust and care about the most.

I would say all of these rules of the road are imperative when it comes to having great experiences in high school. The more you put into it, the more you will get out of the experience. If you sit around and waste time, you won’t find that you’ve had a good time with it; however, if you decide to “drop a gear” and “disappear” fully into high school, you will find you’ve had one of the best experiences of your entire life.