

# Graduate High School or Drop Out A Life Choice Workbook

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Instructions: Read and follow the instructions on each page. The entire packet must be completed and returned by the sentence completion date. Incomplete work will not receive credit!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Case: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## HERNANDO COUNTY YOUTH COURT

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## What is going on?

Let's think about it. Why is the high school graduation rate so low? Why do nearly 3 out of 10 college students need remedial classes? These are not hard questions, so why do we ask them?

A recent survey, *The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives on High School Dropouts*, asked 16-25 year olds why they left high school before graduating. Whether they had gone to an inner city or suburban school, the former students had some common reasons for dropping out.

What was the most common explanation? They were bored.

Here are the top 5 reasons dropouts identify as major factors for leaving school.

- 47% - Classes were not interesting
- 43% - Missed too many days and could not catch up
- 42% - Spent time with people who were not interested in school
- 38% - Had too much freedom and not enough rules in my life
- 35% - Was failing in school

**47%** of dropouts said a major reason they quit school was that their classes weren't interesting. Now let's look at that. How many times have you been sitting in class thinking that you would rather be somewhere else? How many times have you thought how this teacher is even allowed to teach? Well, the studies have shown that you are not alone. Hundreds, thousands of other students your age are thinking the same thing. Now we want to look at what are you going to do to change that? How are you going to be different?

You've had it with boring classes ... Your teacher acts more like a cop than a teacher... school's got nothing to do with real life... You need to make money. There are lots of reasons why people quit school. If some of these complaints sound familiar, maybe even you are thinking about it yourself.

In 2004, about 1.2 million students did not graduate from high school. Each year, almost one third of all public high school students don't make it through school. About half of all blacks, Hispanics and Native Americans don't graduate either.

Now this is NOT intended to encourage kids to drop out of school. We want you to sit down and think. Think about the importance of an education. Think about how many people in third world countries whose parents cannot afford to send them to school would die to be in your shoes right now. Think about how many people die every day trying to comet o the United State to live the "American Dream".

This is the intention of this workbook – to help you see past the smoke screen and believe in yourself. It is never too late to turn your life around. It is never too late to make that change.

Now let's look at this problem seriously!

**Here are some tips to help you focus in class.**

1. Sit closer to the front of the room or the teacher to help you stay focused. Sitting in the back of the classroom, you'll have the urge not to pay attention in class, you'll doze off sometimes, and at other times you may be more talkative. By staying focused in class, you'll be able to understand your homework a lot better, when you take it home that night.
2. Avoid your more talkative friends who will probably distract you from your work.
3. Participate in the class discussions. By participating, you'll understand the subject matter more; therefore you'll get better grades.
4. Take the best notes you can, because you will need them for tests. Good notes consist of:
  - a. Readable penmanship
  - b. Descriptive details
  - c. Formulas (if you're in math or science class)
  - d. Dates and locations of where important events happened.

Most of the time, when you outline your notes they'll be easier to understand when you go home to study them.

5. Make a study guide for each test to get good grades.
6. Get the right amount of sleep.

**How to pay attention in a dull class**

Ok, let's face it – we ALL have had a really boring teacher sometime in our life. However, that does not mean that you still cannot learn what they are teaching. Here are some tips to help you:

1. Recognize that the instructor is human and wants your attention. Like a little kid, they eat up attention and will do just about anything to get it.
2. Position your seat in the second or third row, making sure someone is sitting directly in front of you.
3. Make eye contact with the teacher, nod when you understand, give quizzical looks when you don't understand. Watch the teacher repeat the information you don't quite get. Remember that they are speaking only to you because they have your attention.
4. You can now manipulate this teacher all over the front of the room, sort of like remote control. Stop the eye contact by moving just a little until your line of sight is blocked by the person in front. Notice how they will move to regain the eye contact. You make sure that the move is a little closer to the corner. When they get there, reward them with your eye contact, and then repeat and move them closer to the corner. Keep doing this until they are fully in the corner.
5. Remember while doing all this, you are learning the material and having a little fun too!

You have to learn techniques to make even the most boring class interesting. Turn a negative into a positive. Take the initiative and research the topic that the teacher is teaching and find an interesting way to remember it. Acronyms often work.

We want you to have good study skills and realize that sometimes life is not all fun and games. Hard work in the end ALWAYS pays off!!

You were not born to fail; you were born to succeed.

One of the secrets of success is dropping the negatives and excuses. Work hard and NEVER give up!

### **Profile of a Successful Student**

- Successful students think about the future, not just about today.
- They choose their friends wisely, surrounding themselves with people who have the same goals they do. Other people's envy doesn't bother them.
- Successful students will get jobs to help their families when necessary, but will keep their goals in mind and work towards them.
- Successful students will postpone marriage and having children until they are well on their way to achieving their goals.
- Some people come from families that make it hard to break away from poverty. But successful students think of that as a hurdle to jump over, not a brick wall.
- Long before graduation day, the successful student has planned his/her next step, whether it is college, technical, or vocational training. Whatever successful students take on, they won't quit; they will work hard toward achieving their goals. They may not succeed in everything they do, but they will always try.

### **Success comes in cans; failure comes in cants!**

#### **JJ -- A Success Story**

My name is JJ. I am 17 years old. It thought it was cool to ditch school, steal cars, get high, and sell drugs to other kids. That got me lots of money and respect.

It also got me thrown in jail. I had the coolest clothes, \$100 sunglasses and \$150 sneakers. Now, I wear an orange, prison-issued jumpsuit and cheap shoes. I don't need the sunglasses because I don't get out much. I used to stay up until all hours of the night and wake up in the morning with my girl next to me. Now it's lights out at 9 PM, and I wake up in a little cement room. The window is covered by bars.

The funny thing is, this is the best thing that could have happened to me. If I didn't end up here, I probably would have ended up dead. Now I got my G.E.D. and a job waiting for me when I get out in a couple of weeks. I can do something with my life. Not everybody here is planning for the future, but I am.

I found out that even though I can make big bucks dealing dope and stealing cars, there's no FUTURE in it. It leads to jail or an early funeral.

So, I look at it this way: I am still young and have time to make my life mean something. My older brothers weren't so lucky. One was killed. The other one is in jail for armed robbery. There's no reason at all for me to follow in their footsteps.

When I get out, I'm going to make sure my little brother doesn't end up here. Ever.

## Questions & Answers about Dropping Out

**Q. Do dropouts quit school because their parents were drop-outs?**

A. Studies show that a young person is more likely to drop out of school if he/she has family members or close friends who have dropped out of school. But that is not a reason; it is just something that makes it a little harder to stay in school.

**Q. What about girls? Do they drop out because they are pregnant?**

A. Many girls say they drop out because of pregnancy or marriage. But some girls say they drop out because "school is hard".

**Q. Are dropouts dumb?**

A. No. Dropouts are not dumb. Some do have difficulty in school – but there is help available to those who want it. Some dropouts say they're too smart to be in school. If that's the case, they should try and take advantage of the situation and try and get a college scholarship. If they don't want to go to college, they should take the GED test so they have more job opportunities.

**Q. Do dropouts who go back to school have a hard time finding a job when they graduate?**

A. No. Dropouts who go back and get their high school diplomas have many more job opportunities than those who don't. In the end, they have a much better chance of finding a rewarding, good paying job.

**Q. What are the most effective ways of keeping students from dropping out of school?**

A. (1) Encourage youth to participate in extracurricular activities. Studies show that students who are more involved at school are less likely to drop out.

(2) Make sure students know where to get help if they are having difficulty with their schoolwork.

(3) Have a dropout prevention counselor at every school (someone the students can speak to when they are considering becoming a dropout – and from whom they can get facts about the hardships of dropping out of school.

**Q. When are people considered to be dropouts?**

A. People are officially considered to be dropouts when they are not enrolled in school. Students who are enrolled but never attend school may also be considered dropouts.

**Q. Which states have the highest dropout rates?**

A. The states with the highest dropout rates are: Arizona, California, **Florida**, Georgia, and Nevada. The states with the lowest dropout rates are: North Dakota, Minnesota, Wyoming, Iowa, and Nebraska.

*Taken from Arise workbook "So you are thinking of dropping out of school"*

## “My Dream Job”

After sitting on many panels, we often ask what do you want to do when you grow up? And often the answer is: “I want to play professional basketball, baseball or football.” So we thought we would get you the statistics on actually getting into the pros. This is not intended to discourage young people’s dreams – we just want you to look realistically at what you want to do with the rest of your life!

- Less than 5 percent of high school athletes go on to become college athletes. That is five out of 100.
- 0.15% from High School make pro. That is less than 1%.
- Fewer than 3 percent of college athletes turn pro. In other words, for every 100 college athletes, only 3 go on to pro sports.

Here is an article about what’s going on in the job market.

### 10 Hot Professions for 2009

*Joy Victory, Payscale.com, Yahoo! HotJobs*

**As the global economy continues to falter, job prospects for 2009 are expected to slow. But if you're lucky enough to be in one of these top fields, your job future is still quite bright. Take a look at this list below and either thank your lucky stars that your job is already on it, or consider seeking the education and experience for the career that most interests you.**

**Auditor.** With all of the economic upheaval, businesses are being watched more carefully than ever. "There is a lot of money flowing into companies right now due to the stimulus package," says Ron Mitchell, CEO and co-founder of GottaMentor, a career coaching service located in New York City. "And, we've all seen some issues with, 'Where is this money going to?'" He adds that auditors are mostly working for the big four [accounting firms] and also as internal auditors. *Average Yearly Salary - \$64,914*

**Career Counselor.** More folks than usual are starting off the New Year without a job in sight. How can the out-of-work find gainful employment? From outplacement agencies to government programs, career counselors and coaches will be very busy in 2009 helping make things easier. Mitchell encourages those seeking work to get professional help, saying, "Many individuals will need to completely re-engineer their careers. In order to do that, people need personalized guidance and feedback from an expert counselor." *Average Yearly Salary - \$54,426*

**Counselor.** Besides their bank accounts, people's self-esteem and confidence are getting hit hard these days. "People's self worth is tied up in their job, so you have a huge identity crisis happening. Counseling and mental health services will be in high demand," says Mitchell. Guidance and some soul-searching can result in new and better careers for those in transition. *Average Yearly Salary - \$40,275*

**Public Relations Specialist.** Rather than promoting a line of sparkly, new products or an exciting initiative, many public relations professionals will spend the upcoming year smoothing over unfortunate events. Mitchell predicts: "Being able to tell a story about major layoffs, reduced sales, and failed mergers, without causing a panic in the market, will become even more important." *Average Yearly Salary - \$44,334*

**Factor.** A what? Didn't you study those in algebra? While this career is fairly foreign to most folks, now that bank loans are hard to come by, factoring allows small business to get funding based on their current accounts receivable -

- the money they expect to have coming in. Factoring works well for retailers and other businesses that have big receivables. Mitchell explains that factoring is a legitimate source of funds in hard times. He says, "It's a huge business and, at a time when people can't get other types of lending, factors are skilled experts at lending against accounts receivables." *Average Yearly Salary - \$79,846*

Health-Care Technician. You may know that nurses are in demand, but what about the folks they work with? "There's never enough of them, like radiology technicians, lab assistants, and home health aides. Health-care is the largest industry in the country, and in the more technical aspects of those careers we have a huge shortage of personnel," says Mitchell. *Average Yearly Salary (Pharmacy Technician) - \$32,531*

Mechanical Engineer (and all engineering fields). With every passing year, more skilled-labor jobs are replaced by complex automation or robotics systems. For example, some hospitals have turned to "robotic pharmacies" to help dispense medication. It's the engineers who help build these automated systems, says Jim Turnquist, director of career services at Michigan Technological University in Houghton, Mich. "In the U.S. we only graduate 70,000 engineers per year, but we're going to need 100,000 per year. The demand is going to go way up." *Average Yearly Salary - \$71,490*

Networking/System Administrator. Since almost all business transactions these days are done with the assistance of a vast computer network, the people who understand how to keep computer networks running smoothly are critically important -- and consequently, in high demand. "Network and system administrators maintain the company's infrastructure. People need people to fix and monitor their infrastructure, keep them updated," Mitchell says. *Average Yearly Salary - \$54,193*

Nurse. The health-care field has been booming for a long time, and all signs indicate it will continue to do so, says Turnquist. He also says college students and people looking for a new job field would be wise to consider physical therapy and similar "exercise science" fields, since aging Baby Boomers will be looking for ways to remain active long into their later years. *Average Yearly Salary (Registered Nurse) - \$53,840*

Software Designer/Developer. Companies from all sectors of the economy are looking for software engineers and programmers, says Turnquist. This is because society in general is becoming more tech-dependent -- just think of how rapidly cell phones change with each passing year -- requiring software developers that can stay abreast of all the changes. *Average Yearly Salary - \$72,070*

**Source: All salary data is from PayScale.com. The salaries listed are median, annual salaries for full-time workers with 5-8 years of experience and include any bonuses, commissions or profit sharing.**

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What is the first thing that is needed when building a house? \_\_\_\_\_

If you said "foundation", that is correct. High school is your foundation. It can open up so many doors and allow you to build several floors in your home. However, if you have no foundation -- your home will sink!

**Understanding Job Qualifications**

Match the job in the left-hand column with the correct educational requirement in the right-hand column.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)</li> <li>2. Corrections Worker/Jailer</li> <li>3. Truck Driver</li> <li>4. Auto Mechanic</li> <li>5. Electrician or Carpenter</li> <li>6. Social Worker</li> <li>7. Computer Programmer</li> <li>8. Painter</li> <li>9. Special Education Teacher</li> <li>10. Dental Hygienist</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. A 144 to 160 hour training course from a driving academy</li> <li>B. Associate degree from a medical vocational school or community college</li> <li>C. Bachelor's degree in education and sometimes a master's degree in education</li> <li>D. No formal training required</li> <li>E. 2-year certificate program at an automotive vocational school or community college</li> <li>F. Associate degree in computers from a community college or vocational school</li> <li>G. An 11-month nursing program</li> <li>H. Either a bachelor's degree or master's degree in social work called an BSW/MSW</li> <li>I. A 10-week certificate program from a law enforcement academy</li> <li>J. 1-year vocational certificate from a community college or vocational/technical center' or a 4-year construction apprenticeship program.</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

**Earning Potential**

Status	Per Year	Per Month
High School Graduate	\$35,620	\$2,968
High School Dropout	\$20,176	\$1,681
Prison Inmate (FL Min. Wage)	\$15,078	\$1,256

**Florida's Worst Paying Jobs**

Occupation	Total Employed	Average Annual Earnings
Fast Food Cooks	20,720	\$17,370
Cafeteria Workers	29,820	\$18,090
Fast Food Servers	168,100	\$17,350
Waiters	193,350	\$20,640



### What you can hope to earn

Occupation	Per Year	Per Month
	<b>Professional</b>	
Veterinary Assistant	\$22,790	\$1,899
Firefighter	\$45,520	\$3,793
Elementary School Teacher	\$50,440	\$4,203
High School Teacher	\$53,210	\$4,434
Computer Programmer	\$66,120	\$5,510
Commercial Pilot	\$68,230	\$5,686
Scientist	\$74,790	\$6,233
	<b>Finance</b>	
Credit Analyst	\$58,240	\$4,853
Accountants/Auditors	\$61,200	\$5,100
Financial Analyst	\$68,470	\$5,706
	<b>Law Enforcement</b>	
Law Clerk	\$36,400	\$3,033
Correctional Officer	\$42,390	\$3,533
Science Technicians (CSI)	\$45,323	\$3,776
Police Officer	\$51,320	\$4,277
Police Chief	\$81,900	\$6,825
Judge	\$100,450	\$8,371
Lawyer	\$113,780	\$9,482
	<b>Health Care</b>	
Medical Assistant	\$27,970	\$2,330
Dental Assistant	\$33,680	\$2,807
Dental Hygienist	\$59,010	\$4,918
Nurse	\$61,290	\$5,108
Psychiatrist	\$159,640	\$13,303
General Surgeon	\$185,810	\$15,484
Anesthesiologist	\$193,130	\$16,094
Obstetrician	\$209,840	\$17,487
	<b>Sales</b>	
Cashier	\$18,090	\$1 508
Retail Sales Clerk	\$28,010	\$2 334
Sales Representative	\$55,120	\$4 593
Sales Manager	\$79,790	\$6,649
	<b>Trades</b>	
School Bus Driver	\$25,120	\$2,093
Laborer	\$25,390	\$2,115
Auto Mechanic	\$35,970	\$2,998
Plumber	\$37,840	\$3,153
Electrician	\$39,490	\$3,291

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Florida, May 2008

### Older & Wiser

Answer the following questions to better understand where you want to be 10 years from now.

1. Where do you see yourself in 10 years as far as relationships are concerned?
  - a. Married
  - b. Single
  - c. Dating
  - d. Living with someone
  
2. If you see yourself in a relationship, what qualities do you want your partner to have? What kind of education? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
3. Do you think you will have children (or additional children)? How many? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
4. What will your educational background be? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
5. What kind of job will you have? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
6. What kind of annual salary will you earn? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
7. What kind of car will you drive? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
8. What is your occupational goal? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. Please write a job description. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. What is the salary potential for this job? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

11. What is the required education?  
a. High school? \_\_\_\_\_  
b. College? \_\_\_\_\_  
c. Graduate studies? \_\_\_\_\_

12. What other preparation is required? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

OK, now taking all that into consideration, let's look at your current grades:

What is your current GPA? \_\_\_\_\_

How many classes have you failed this year? \_\_\_\_\_

How many disciplinary referrals have you gotten this year? \_\_\_\_\_

What could you have done differently this year? If you are failing, why are you failing? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Have you tried to get help? If no, why not? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What do your parents think about your grades? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What are you going to do to change? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to have some help from us? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

What kind of grades are your friends receiving? Are they failing as well? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Pretend that we have a magic eraser than can help you start from scratch academically. What do you think you could do to make things better? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

How many hours do you study each night? \_\_\_\_\_

How much homework do you complete each night? \_\_\_\_\_

How many hours do you watch TV each night? \_\_\_\_\_

How many hours do you spend on the computer each night? \_\_\_\_\_

Now, for the next week, we want you to add 2 hours of studying (any subject) each night. Your parents have to sign off on your study time every day. While 2 hours may seem like a lifetime to you, in reality it isn't that much time.

Day	How many hours?	Parent signature
Sunday		
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		

## Understanding a Budget

Here is a budget showing the monthly cost of living for the average single person. This is the bare minimum expenses, and can vary depending on where you live.

Rent	\$	650
Groceries	\$	250
Utilities (gas, electric, water, phone, cable)	\$	210
Transportation/car payments	\$	200
Car insurance	\$	200
Gas	\$	100
Car repairs	\$	25
Insurance (medical-optional)	\$	120
Entertainment, restaurants	\$	100
Personal health & grooming	\$	100
Clothes	\$	25
<b>Monthly Total</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>1,980.</b>
<b>Yearly Total</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b><u>23, 760.</u></b>

The next several exercises are designed to get you to think about what you are going to do with the rest of your life if you don't get your studies together.

**Minimum Wage Budget Plan**

Florida Minimum Wage

Per hour	\$	7.25
Per 40 hour work week	\$	\$290.00
Per month	\$	\$1,255.70
Annual income	\$	<u>\$15,068.40</u>

(These wages are all BEFORE taxes)

Create a budget (similar to the one above) using these figures. You MUST do research and attach it to the workbook in the back. Get pricing on rent, utilities, cars, car insurance, groceries, etc. and put the figures on the following worksheet. Remember, this is according to the pay scale above. Ask your parents or siblings for information that you are not sure about. Go on utility websites (Bright House, WREC, FPL, etc.) to see how much their basic services cost.

Rent (small apartment, shared house)	\$	_____
Groceries	\$	_____
Utilities (gas, electric, water, phone, cable)	\$	_____
Transportation/car payments	\$	_____
Car insurance	\$	_____
Gas	\$	_____
Car repairs	\$	_____
Insurance (medical-optional)	\$	_____
Entertainment, restaurants	\$	_____
Personal health & grooming	\$	_____
Clothes	\$	_____
<b>Monthly Total</b>	<b>\$</b>	_____
<b>Yearly Total</b>	<b>\$</b>	_____

So, how was that? Did you have to sacrifice in certain areas to be able to afford things in others?

**High School Graduate Budget**

Now, do the exact same exercise using the average salary of a high school graduate:

Year	\$	35,620	
Month	\$	2,968	
Week	\$	685	
Rent (small apartment, shared house)	\$		_____
Groceries	\$		_____
Utilities (gas, electric, water, phone, cable)	\$		_____
Transportation/car payments	\$		_____
Car insurance	\$		_____
Gas	\$		_____
Car repairs	\$		_____
Insurance (medical-optional)	\$		_____
Entertainment, restaurants	\$		_____
Personal health & grooming	\$		_____
Clothes	\$		_____
<b>Monthly Total</b>	\$		_____
<b>Yearly Total</b>	\$		_____

With all of this being said, we hope that you think long and hard about staying in high school and making good grades so your foundation is nice and sturdy.

### **Budget Research**

Look in the paper or on the internet and print out sample prices for your budget plan, and attach them here.