



Graduate High School or Drop Out: A Life Choice Workbook

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: _____

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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 their 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 2017, about 18% of Florida students did not graduate from high school due to dropping out.

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 come to 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.
7. Talk to your teacher about after school tutoring; then, attend regularly.

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.

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, \$200 sunglasses and \$180 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: Nevada, Oregon, and Alaska, with Florida close by. The states with the lowest dropout rates are: Texas, West Virginia, and New Jersey.

“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!

- Of the 8 million students in the United States, only 480,000 will complete in college sports
- 0.035% from High School make it to professional status.
- 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 of the most in-demand jobs for 2018

<https://www.thejobnetwork.com>

It’s never too early to start thinking about your next move. So whether that’s a career change or a step up in your field, we have some of the hottest job opportunities for 2018. Think of it as being like planning your holiday shopping early. You don’t *have* to, but if you know what you want to get and can jump on sales early, you’ll be better off when the time comes.

Let’s look at some of the best job opportunities for 2018.

Fitness Trainer

The fitness trend isn’t going away anytime soon, as health and wellness continue to be a hot topic for people across all age groups. Trainers are the professionals who help people develop and maintain a fitness plan at the gym, lead fitness classes, and educate clients on exercise and physical fitness. The demand for fitness trainers is expected to grow about 8% by 2022, per the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

What you’ll need: A high school diploma or equivalent, plus on-the-job training. Physical fitness is also a must (this is a do-as-I-do kind of job, not do-as-I-say). Trainers may also need to pass a certification test, depending on your state’s requirements.

What they make: The median salary is \$38,160, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Occupational Therapist Assistant

Healthcare careers are hot, no doubt about it—it’s a field that will continue to see increased demand, especially as the Baby Boomer population ages and requires more direct healthcare. Occupational therapist assistants are responsible for working with licensed therapists to implement therapy plans for patients, helping the patients recover from illness or injury, as well as developing and strengthening the skills they’ll need for daily living (like moving, dressing, eating, personal hygiene, traveling, etc.). The demand for occupational therapist assistants is expected to grow an astonishing 40% by 2022, per the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

What you'll need: An associate's degree from a certified allied health program. Most states also require occupational therapist assistants to be licensed, so check your state's requirements.

What they make: The median salary is \$56,070, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Personal Financial Advisor

Are you a whiz at math, and find the ins and outs of personal investments fascinating? If either of those things is true, you might want to consider becoming a personal financial advisor. These finance professionals work with clients to help them manage their money, advising on everything from insurance to investments to long-term planning. If you're a lone wolf, this might be a good choice for you as well—many financial advisors are self-employed, creating and maintaining client relationships directly. The demand for personal financial advisors is expected to grow more than 30% by 2022, per the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

What you'll need: A bachelor's degree in accounting, finance, or a similar area. Master's degrees can also be an asset in this field, as can optional certification.

What they make: The median salary is \$90,530, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Computer Software Engineer

It's not hard to see why this field is going to continue to be a big one in 2018. Startups and big companies alike are looking for creative, innovative developers and software engineers to design and refine computer programs. Software engineers develop apps or task-specific programs, or work on the underlying systems that run devices and networks. The demand for software engineers is expected to grow more than 17% by 2022, per the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics—much faster than average.

What you'll need: A bachelor's degree in computer science, plus strong computer programming skills.

What they make: This is a very high-paying field, if you've got the degree and the skills: the median salary is \$102,280, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Registered Nurse

If you've heard about nurses in the news lately, it was likely in an article about how there's a shortage of qualified nurses out there. And in a healthcare field that continues to grow with no end in sight, that makes it a good career opportunity for someone interested in a patient care role. Nurses work in many different settings—hospitals, doctors' offices, agencies, schools, clinics, and many more—providing and coordinating patient medical care. The demand for registered nurses is expected to grow more than 16% by 2022, per the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

What you'll need: An associate's or bachelor's degree in nursing, or a certificate from an accredited allied health program in nursing. Nurses also need to be licensed.

What they make: The median salary is \$68,450, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Pharmacy Technician

Becoming a pharmacy tech is another way to break into the healthcare industry, if patient care isn't really your thing. These technicians work in pharmacies (in stores, hospitals, clinics, or other healthcare settings) to dispense prescription medication to customers or health professionals. The demand for pharmacy technicians is expected to grow by about 9% by 2022, per the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

What you'll need: A high school diploma, and some employers require a certificate from a certified pharmacy technician program. Most states also require official certification.

What they make: The median salary is \$30,920, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Biomedical Engineer

Biomedical engineering is the meetup point of two very hot industries these days: healthcare and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics). These engineers develop equipment, devices, software, and computer systems used in medical facilities. They use both technical expertise and biology to create and refine the way doctors diagnose and treat patients. The demand for biomedical engineers is expected to grow by a huge 23% by 2022, per the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

What you'll need: A bachelor's degree in biomedical engineering or bioengineering.

What they make: The median salary is \$85,620, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Market Research Analyst

Data drives everything we do—and it affects how companies create and sell products. Just about every industry is obsessed with market and customer data right now, and how they can use that to give themselves an edge. This is where market research analysts come in—they take raw data and analyze it to understand customers, predict trends, determine what pricing should be, and provide valuable feedback from the marketplace. The demand for market research analysts is expected to grow by a huge 19% by 2022, per the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics—much faster than average.

What you'll need: A bachelor's degree in marketing or economics, although a master's degree is strongly recommended by some employers. You will also need very strong math and analytical skills for this job.

What they make: The median salary is \$62,560, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Environmental Engineering Technician

Anything tagged with "green" or "sustainable" is also a hot industry these days, so if you're interested in both scientific analysis *and* the environment, becoming an environmental engineering technician could be a great option. These technicians work with environmental engineers to collect environmental data (like water samples or soil samples) for analysis, or work with equipment designed to prevent or clean up pollution. The demand for

environmental engineering technicians is expected to grow by 10% by 2022, per the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

What you'll need: An associate's degree or higher in environmental engineering technology, plus strong analytical skills.

What they make: The median salary is \$49,170, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

[Skin Care Specialist](#)

"Self-care" seems to have become not only a catchphrase in recent years, but also a way of life. More than ever, people are turning to spa and medical treatments to take care of skin issues or fight the ever-ongoing battle against aging. Also known as "estheticians," Skin care specialists are often the first line of defense in that battle, working in spas, clinics, and salons to help clients cleanse and treat skin for optimal health. The demand for skin care specialists is expected to grow by 10% by 2022, per the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

What you'll need: A certificate from an accredited cosmetology or esthetician program, plus licensing (which is currently required in all states but Connecticut).

What they make: The median salary is \$30,270, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

So, are you ready for a change with one of these fast-growing jobs in 2018? If you're interested in a new career to go with a new year, one of these could be the best path for you.

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!

Earning Potential

| Status | Per Year | Per Month |
|--------------------------|----------|-----------|
| College Graduate | \$61,828 | \$4,756 |
| High School Graduate | \$37,336 | \$2,872 |
| High School Dropout | \$26,780 | \$2,060 |
| Florida Minimum Wage Job | \$17,160 | \$1,320 |

What you can hope to earn in Florida

| Occupation | Beginning Salary Per Year | Beginning Salary Per Month | Average Salary After Five Years | Average Salary Per Month After Five Years |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| | Professional | | | |
| Veterinary Assistant | \$18,480 | \$1,540 | \$25,280 | \$2,107 |
| Firefighter | \$29,210 | \$2,248 | \$50,780 | \$4,232 |
| School Teacher | \$36,306 | \$2,792 | \$48,134 | \$4,011 |
| Computer Programmer | \$38,797 | \$3,233 | \$73,195 | \$6,100 |
| Commercial Pilot | \$34,750 | \$2,896 | \$75,170 | \$6,264 |
| Marine Biologist | \$44,310 | \$3,693 | \$53,878 | \$4,490 |
| | Finance | | | |
| Bank Teller | \$22,880 | \$1,907 | \$25,000 | \$2,083 |
| Credit Analyst | \$44,750 | \$3,729 | \$64,594 | \$5,383 |
| Accountants/Auditors | \$46,480 | \$3,873 | \$100,194 | \$8,350 |
| Financial Analyst | \$51,335 | \$4,278 | \$76,190 | \$6,349 |
| | Law Enforcement | | | |
| Law Clerk | \$29,000 | \$2,417 | \$46,990 | \$3,916 |
| Correctional Officer | \$30,730 | \$2,561 | \$42,360 | \$3,530 |
| Science Technicians (CSI) | \$42,240 | \$3,520 | \$55,950 | \$4,663 |
| Police Officer | \$36,340 | \$3,028 | \$57,160 | \$4,763 |
| Circuit Judge | \$146,080 | \$12,173 | | |
| Lawyer | \$71,401 | \$5,950 | \$130,343 | \$10,862 |
| | Health Care | | | |
| CNA | \$17,280 | \$1,440 | \$24,000 | \$2,000 |
| Medical Assistant | \$30,142 | \$2,512 | \$35,297 | \$2,941 |
| Dental Assistant | \$20,645 | \$1,720 | \$28,034 | \$2,336 |
| Dental Hygienist | \$45,884 | \$3,824 | \$62,238 | \$5,187 |
| Nurse | \$46,598 | \$3,883 | \$64,890 | \$5,408 |
| Psychiatrist | \$61,600 | \$5,133 | \$182,700 | \$15,225 |
| General Surgeon | \$258,563 | \$21,547 | | |

| | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|----------|-----------|---------|
| Anesthesiologist | \$352,518 | \$29,376 | | |
| Obstetrician | \$265,985 | \$22,165 | | |
| | | | | |
| | Sales | | | |
| Publix Cashier | \$17,000 | \$1,417 | \$22,000 | \$1,833 |
| Car Salesman | \$15,360 | \$1,280 | \$33,350 | \$2,779 |
| Pharmaceutical Sales Rep | \$55,000 | \$4,583 | \$77,570 | \$6,464 |
| Sales Manager | \$64,518 | \$5,376 | \$102,440 | \$8,537 |
| | | | | |
| | Trades | | | |
| School Bus Driver | \$15,504 | \$1,292 | \$17,380 | \$1,448 |
| Laborer | \$17,203 | \$1,434 | \$26,304 | \$2,192 |
| Auto Mechanic | \$36,551 | \$3,046 | \$47,000 | \$3,917 |
| Airplane Mechanic | \$46,790 | \$3,899 | \$119,040 | \$9,920 |
| Welder | \$22,464 | \$1,872 | \$34,214 | \$2,851 |
| Plumber | \$40,454 | \$3,371 | \$50,000 | \$4,167 |
| Electrician | \$24,787 | \$2,066 | \$39,130 | \$3,261 |

Source: Payscale 2018

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? 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 / play video games each night? _____

How many hours do you spend on the computer / phone 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 | \$ 750 |
| Groceries | \$ 250 |
| Utilities (gas, electric, water, phone, cable) | \$ 350 |
| Transportation/car payments | \$ 300 |
| Car insurance | \$ 250 |
| Gas | \$ 150 |
| Insurance (medical-optional) | \$ 120 |
| Entertainment, restaurants | \$ 100 |
| Personal health & grooming | \$ 100 |
| Miscellaneous | \$ 100 |
| Monthly Total | \$ 2,470 |
| Yearly Total | \$ 29,640 |

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 | \$ | 8.25 |
| Per 40-hour work week | \$ | 330.00 |
| Per month | \$ | 1,320.00 |
| Annual income | \$ | 15,840 |

(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 | \$ | _____ |
| Miscellaneous | \$ | _____ |
| Monthly Total | \$ | _____ |
| Yearly Total | \$ | _____ |

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 | \$ | 37,336 | |
| Month | \$ | 2,872 | |
| Week | \$ | 718 | |
| 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 | \$ | | _____ |
| Monthly Total | \$ | | _____ |
| Yearly Total | \$ | | _____ |

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.

Dream Job Budget

Now, do the exercise again using the average salary of your dream job (find the information on [payscale.com](https://www.payscale.com) if it is not already posted in this packet):

| | | |
|--|-----------|-------|
| Year | \$ | |
| Month | \$ | |
| Week | \$ | |
| 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 | \$ | _____ |
| Monthly Total | \$ | _____ |
| Yearly Total | \$ | _____ |

Budget Research

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