

Understanding Georgia's Graduation Requirements 6th Grade Activity Estimated time: 30 Minutes

Georgia Teachers-As-Advisors Framework-

Goal 6-2.2 - Recognize and attain performance levels necessary to reach educational and career goals.

a. Recognize the importance of achievement and performance to the attainment of educational and career goals.

Objectives:

- Understand the importance of graduating from high school
- Become familiar with the new graduation requirements for Georgia

Materials:

- "Georgia's Graduation Requirements" Handout/Optional: Cookies

Activity:

1. *Greet students:* Good Morning, welcome to advisement. *Ask:* How many of you are planning to graduate from high school? *Allow time for discussion. If any students do not raise their hands, take time to discuss why they are not planning to graduate high school. Write down their comments and give to your graduation coach as a reference. This is not the time to change their minds. It is important for students to vent their feelings and for your advisement committee to consider their concerns as a group. After the discussion, tell the students, Thanks for your honest comments. For now, let's talk some more about what you need to do to graduate from high school. With new information, you may find that everyone can graduate from high school. It's the job of your teachers, counselors and advisors to help you get there. You might be saying to yourself, "Geez, I just got to middle school. Why do I need to know about graduating from high school? I don't even know what I have to do to get to high school, let alone graduate!" You are right, of course. No one expects you to know everything about high school at this time. But it is important for you to know what is in your future so that you can picture yourself as a high school graduate. How many of you had "graduation" from kindergarten? That's really planning early for high school graduation! So, planning high school graduation from middle school doesn't seem so silly. Let's get started.*
2. *Distribute the handout:* "Graduation Requirements". *Say:* Graduating from high school is like eating a big cookie. Do you want yours to be a tasty chocolate chip cookie, a sugar cookie, a peanut butter cookie or will you be satisfied with cookie crumbs? If you don't follow the recipe, you may end up with something that is not a cookie at all! The great thing is that YOU get to choose your type of graduation cookie. We will show you how to plan, make, and enjoy the type of program you choose as your pathway to graduation. Let's go over some terms that may be new to you. Every recipe has ingredients. Let's look at some of the ingredients that make up a high school graduation cookie.
3. *Say:* First we want to understand what a credit is and how it is important to graduation. *Write the word CREDIT on the board or flip chart. Have student read the explanation on their handout for a credit. Ask if there are any questions or ask some probing question to determine understanding by the group.*
4. *Say:* Look at the number of credits you will need in each area. How many total credits will you need? 23 How many credits will you need in English? Math? Social Studies? Science? Health and PE?
5. *Say:* The next part is tricky! There two types of electives: required and selected. Required means you MUST take 3 specific electives that you can choose from a list of courses (these

usually reflect a career interest); then you MUST take 4 other electives from all the courses offered at your high school--in other words the classes you choose to take.

6. *Say:* Let's work a little math. If you need 4 CREDITS in English to graduate and each course counts 1 credit per year, how many years will you need to take English at the high school? 4 years to earn 4 CREDITS Also let's determine which CLASS you will be in for graduation. What year will you enter the 9th grade? What year will you graduate? Tell students to write their year of graduation on the handout THE CLASS OF _ _ _ _ . Write this on the board or flip chart.
7. *Say:* Each year we will help you understand more and more about graduation requirements. Do you have any questions about the number of credits you will need to graduate? *Allow for questions. You may have other questions. If you, the advisor, cannot answer the questions, record them and take them to the counselor. The counselor should be able to answer most questions during the next advisement session or could provide answers during morning announcements, in the school newspaper or on GAcollge411.*
8. *Say:* There are a couple of other ingredients to this GRADUATION COOKIE that you should be aware of: *Write these terms on the board or flip chart as you explain them to the students:*
 - GPA – This stands for Grade Point Average. When you enter the 9th grade, at the end of every term, your grades are averaged. It is important to always do your best in high school. Grades that are low or failing are always part of your grade point average. Make this your motto: NO F'S.”
 - Required Courses - Your high school diploma is awarded by the State of Georgia based on a certain number of courses. Some of them are required such as 4 credits of English. Look on your handout for the exact number of credits by subject area.” *Review by asking students, “As an example, how many credits do you need in Science to graduate? 4 How many credits do you need in Math to graduate? 4 You may not all have the exact same classes, but you will need the same number of credits.*
 - Electives - are courses that students choose for themselves. These are similar to our Connections or Exploratory classes. Remember, though, that you must pass classes to earn credit. Grades for every class you take become part of your GPA. Also remember these grades can impact your HOPE Scholarship.
 - “Peach State Pathways” – There are 60+ Pathways designated by the State of Georgia. These pathways represent a plan of study aligned with your self-selected career goal. Throughout middle school and high school you will have the opportunity to discover your interests (the things that make your heart sing, that make you happy to do), your aptitudes (those things which you do well easily) and select possible careers. A pathway provides a sense of direction for you. GAcollge411 is your primary tool for education and career planning. *Write the web site on the board www.GACollege411.org. Use Gacollege411 to help you along your pathway.*
 - “GHSGT”- The Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHSGT) is an assessment every student must pass to receive a Georgia High School diploma. You will take that test in your 11th grade year. You are learning knowledge and skills that you will be tested on as a junior in high school. So study, study, study! *Say:* “No one expects you to be Paula Dean or Emeril right now. Everything worthwhile in life takes planning and practice. That's why we're talking about high school graduation to you now. Everyone knows “You gotta eat!” Bon Appetit! (Good Eating) *Hand out cookies to your students, if you so choose.*

Georgia Graduation Requirements
A GRADUATION COOKIE

What is a credit? Each high school class you take and PASS has value. This value is called a credit. For example, an English class at the high school is worth ONE CREDIT and usually represents a year of work. Students can graduate from high school based on the number of credits they have earned in specific courses.

English	4 CREDITS
Math	4 CREDITS
Social Studies	3 CREDITS
Science	4 CREDITS
Health & Physical Education	1 CREDIT
Required electives in:	3 CREDITS
Career, Technical and Agricultural Education and/or	
Fine Arts and/or	
Foreign Language	
Selected electives.....	4 CREDITS
TOTAL CREDITS REQUIRED FOR GRADUATION	23 CREDITS



The CLASS of _____