

# College Professor Critiques Homeschoolers

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I teach sophomore through senior level college students - most of them are "pre-professional" students. They are preparing to go to medical school, dental school, physical therapy school, etc.

As a generalization, I've noticed certain characteristics common in my students who were homeschooled. Some of these are desirable, some not.

Desirable characteristics:

1. They are independent learners and do a great job of taking initiative and being responsible for learning. They don't have to be "spoon fed" as many students do. This gives them an advantage at two specific points in their education; early in college and in graduate education.
2. They handle classroom social situations (interactions with their peers and professors) very well. In general, my homeschooled students are a pleasure to have in class. They greet me when they enter the class, initiate conversations when appropriate, and they don't hesitate to ask good questions. Most of my students do none of these.
3. They are serious about their education and that's very obvious in their attitude, preparedness, and grades.

Areas where homeschooled students can improve:

1. They come to college less prepared in the sciences than their schooled counterparts - sometimes far less prepared. This can be especially troublesome for pre-professional students who need to maintain a high grade



point average from the very beginning.

2. They come to college without sufficient test-taking experience, particularly with timed tests. Many homeschooled students have a high level of anxiety when it comes to taking timed tests.

3. Many homeschooled students have problems meeting deadlines and have to adjust to that in college. That adjustment time in their freshman year can be costly in terms of the way it affects their grades.



My advice to homeschooling parents:

1. If your child is even possibly college bound and interested in the sciences, make sure that they have a solid foundation of science in the high school years.

2. Begin giving timed tests by 7th or 8th grade. I'm referring to all tests that students take, not just national, standardized tests.

I think it is a disservice to not give students timed tests. They tend to focus better and score higher on timed tests, and, they are far better prepared for college and graduate education if they've taken timed tests throughout the high school years.

In the earlier years the timed tests should allow ample time to complete the test as long as the student is working steadily. The objective is for them to know it's timed yet not to feel a time pressure. This helps students to be comfortable taking timed tests and develops confidence in their test-taking abilities.

3. Give your students real deadlines to meet in the high school years. If it's difficult for students to meet these deadlines because they're coming from mom or dad, have them take "outside" classes; online, co-op, or community college.

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Greg Landry is a 14 year veteran homeschool dad and college professor. He also teaches one and two semester online science classes, and offers free 45 minute online seminars..  
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