



Student Characteristics – High School

Volunteers may initially feel a distant (I'm too cool to do this class) attitude from the students. It is important to understand why students may act this way so that you can effectively develop relationships with the students you will be working with.

These students are at the stage where they are not yet adults, but they think of themselves as such as want you to treat them that way. They are feeling the pressure of making major decisions about their future. Their curriculum is much more challenging, and they have less time to achieve the skills and lessons needed to get their diploma. They tend to daydream and often go without much sleep. They want honesty and need to establish their identity.

This age group is usually knowledgeable. Adults find their questions challenging and are usually pleasantly surprised by their maturity.

These students need to be taken seriously. They will value your sincere interest in their lives and their futures, especially if that sincerity is backed by relevant and engaging examples from your own life.

Many students still react to peer-pressure. Students are also seeking to express their own individuality. All behavior has a social purpose and it is usually to get attention. Never personalize student negative behavior and remain positive.

Many high school students struggle with the desire for the privileges of adulthood. At the same time, many students this age are already dealing with adult-level responsibilities, such as working and managing finances. Many of these youth do not trust because of negative life experience, you need to build and earn their trust.

Though they may dress and act very mature, remember that they are still young. Don't be intimidated – be yourself! They will warm up to you; it may just take a little longer.

One of the keys to working with teenagers is to engage in casual conversations. This is the key to developing relationships and connection with students.