

Make a Teen Years Time Capsule

As a parent looking back on your own high school years, it's hard to imagine the intellectual development and emotional ups and downs you went through all those years ago. And even for a teen who is still in the throes of high school, or preparing for college, these tumultuous and formative years may quickly become a distant memory.

But remembering the details of what went on, in the world and in your teen's head, during the high school years can be an important marker in your child's passage into adulthood. For a fun activity that will have lasting effects, make this time capsule with your high school child, to be opened after college graduation. After a few years, your child won't believe how far she's come and how much she's grown!



What You Need:

- Plastic storage bin with lid
- Items from your teen's life as a high schooler (see below)
- Duct tape

What You Do:

Time capsules are meant to capture a particular moment in time or moment in history. In this case, you want to help your teen capture what exactly high school was like, and that means academically, socially, and emotionally.

Academics

Your teen may have moaned and groaned over that major research paper, but now that it's finished, it stands as an important testament to the effort he put into his work, and will make an interesting counterpoint to the college work he'll have completed when he looks at it again. Ideas for academic items to include in your teen's time capsule include:

- Research papers and other long essays
- Your teen's personal statement for college applications, if completed
- Art projects and multimedia (that band demo tape, those photo negatives, etc)
- A copy of a teacher-written college recommendation (sealed)

Social Life

This one is a biggie, as anyone who's been a teenager knows. Friendships, crushes and feuds are all part of the process, and once your teen goes through college, she'll have new insight into the person she's become since high school (and it will probably be a change for the better). Here are some ideas for items to include in your teen's time capsule:

- Letters and postcards sent between friends, and notes passed during class (you know it's happened)
- Favorite photos of friends and more-than-friends (if digital, you will want to have them printed to include them)
- Souvenirs from trips and fun events, such as ticket stubs.
- A favorite shirt or piece of jewelry

Emotions

In high school, teens experience an onslaught of new emotions, and it's a major part of the path to adulthood. From intense feelings of attraction, competition, jealousy and camaraderie to fears and dreams for the future, emotions rule the day in high school. Here are some suggested additions to your teen's time capsule, which will help her to remember the emotional roller coaster:

- Her journal, if she is prepared to part with it
- Best book
- Most meaningful movie
- Favorite music
- Favorite item for her bedroom, such as a poster
- Your teen's favorite picture of herself

Next, brainstorm with your teen about other items she may want to include, such as a newspaper or a photo of Mom and Dad. When your teen has gathered these items together, fill the plastic storage bin and use duct tape to seal it tightly. If your teen wants, he can decorate the bin or write a message to his future self in permanent marker. Date the bin. Now, you can either bury the bin in the back yard, or hide it away in the garage. Just don't forget to dig it up when the time is right!

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