

BEST QUOTES ON GRADUATION

The world is more malleable than you think and it's waiting for you to hammer it into shape...That's what this degree of yours is—a blunt instrument. So go forth and build something with it.

—Bono

It is indeed ironic that we spend our school days yearning to graduate and our remaining days waxing nostalgic about our school days.

—Isabel Waxman

The man who graduates to-day and stops learning tomorrow is uneducated the day after.

--Newton D. Baker

That diploma you hold in your hands today is really just your learner's permit for the rest of the drive through life. Remember, you don't have to be smarter than the next person, all you have to do is be willing to work harder than the next person.

—Jimmy Iovine

A graduation ceremony is an event where the commencement speaker tells thousands of students dressed in identical caps and gowns that 'individuality' is the key to success.

—Robert Orben

Your families are extremely proud of you. You can't imagine the sense of relief they are experiencing. This would be a most opportune time to ask for money.

—Gary Bolding

To those of you who received honors, awards and distinctions, I say well done. And to the C students, I say you too may one day be president of the United States.

—President George W.
Bush

A BMW can't take you as far as a diploma.

—Joyce A. Myers

Senioritis (n.) A crippling disease that strikes high school seniors. Symptoms: laziness, an over-excessive wearing of track pants, and sweatshirts. Lack of studying, repeated absences, and a dismissive attitude. The only known cure is a phenomenon known as Graduation.

—Urban Dictionary

Right now about 22 percent of the people in the world graduate high school or the equivalent. That's pathetic.

--Jose Ferreira

Congratulations—the best years of your life are over.

—Unknown

We're here tonight to honor these young people for what they've accomplished in elementary school, and particularly what they've accomplished in middle school. This exercise marks a milestone in their lives. They can no longer be considered children; they are young adults. They are no longer students in elementary school, but will now be high school students. And, for you loving and caring parents, your children will more and more be moving from the protective influence of the home into the sometimes harsh realities of the world.

Tonight, you as graduates, will receive a document—a diploma. And that diploma represents all of your accomplishments, all of your achievements thus far in school. And you've achieved what you have through one attribute—hard work. Although you've all achieved to different degrees, I'm sure one feeling is common among all of you. There are times, perhaps late at night when you're studying for a test, or perhaps in the late afternoon when you're doing homework at a time when you'd much rather be outside with friends—there's a time when you say to yourself, 'Why bother? Why go through all this study, and work, and pain? Hey, who really cares?' The answer to the question, 'Who really cares?' is seated around you tonight. Look around. There are literally hundreds of people here tonight—for you. Parents, grandparents, relatives, friends, teachers, administrators—We are all here because we care. We care about hard work. We care about trying. We care about perfection. We care about YOU.

When you as students walk across this stage tonight to receive your diploma, know that we understand the hard work you've undertaken in the classroom, on the playing field, and in all the aspects of your school life that went into this one, big moment. In a very small way, this is our opportunity to say thank you—thank you for trying; thank you for working to your capacity; thank you for not giving up; thank you for being you.

This is your night. Enjoy it, and accept our wishes that this ceremony may be one part of a rich and rewarding life for each one of you.

—Dan L. Miller

This is not the end, this is not even the beginning of the end.
This is just the end of the beginning.

--Winston Churchill

Socrates gave no diplomas or degrees, and would have subjected any disciple who demanded one to a disconcerting catechism on the nature of true knowledge.

--G. M. Trevelyan

Commencement is when the college students who learned all the answers discover that there are a new set of questions.

--Unknown

When the commencement orator tells the graduating class that the world is their oyster, he should also explain the difficulty of cracking the shell.

--Unknown

One thing that keeps a lot of people from going to college is high school.

--Unknown

Surely the shortest commencement address in history—and for me one of the most memorable—was that of Dr. Harold E. Hyde, President of New Hampshire's Plymouth State College. He reduced his message to the graduating class to these three ideals: 'Know yourself—Socrates. Control yourself—Cicero; Give yourself—Christ.'

--Walter T. Tatara

Graduation is the intermission between school and real life.

--Unknown

On completion of the required course of studies, the student is given a B.A. or, if he has avoided all impractical courses, the B.S. He is now entitled to put his degree after his name, like an M.D., but will be subjected to considerable ridicule if he does, unless he lives in England.

The degree is proof of the fact that the student is Educated, despite doubts raised by his inability to write clearly, keep his bank account balanced, or be logical in an argument. When people ask him, 'Where did you go?' he is able to tell where he went.

--Richard Armour

'Four long years of college,' sighed the girl graduate, 'and who has it got me?'

--Unknown

The degree is formally conferred at Commencement, the final test of the student's stamina and fortitude. Commencement takes place in June, the weather determining whether it is held indoors or outdoors. If it is held indoors, in the college gym, which is without air conditioning and smells of sweat socks, it will be the hottest day of the year, while if it is held outdoors there will be a steady downpour, beginning almost the instant the College Chaplain opens the ceremony with the invocation. Possibly what sounds like 'Let us spray' is heard by some ancient rain god.

Students wear academic robes, which are black because students are supposed to be in mourning at having to leave college after four happy years of examinations, term papers, and required physical education. On their heads are mortarboards, a type of headgear which has never caught on for everyday use. While the glee club is singing, a wind inevitably rises and students must hold onto their mortarboards or graduate bareheaded.

--Richard Armour

Educational certificates, diplomas and degrees are losing their value as measures of competence....The modern certificate proves only that the pupil was competent to endure a certain number of years' schooling.

--Laurence Peter

Once you have the cap and gown all you need do is open your mouth. Whatever nonsense you talk becomes wisdom and all the rubbish, good sense.

--Molière

I never graduated from Iowa. I was only there for two terms—Truman's and Eisenhower's.

--Alex Karras

May the petalled hours
Of your Commencement Day unfold
Bright with the hues
Of hope and joy...
And may the heart of this day hold
Warm tones of friendship
Tinged with memory's gold

--Mary R. Hurley

Old memories
Of freshman hazing,
Pre-game rallies
With bonfires blazing...
Memories of
Weekend dances
Blend with those
Of light romances...
Memories of study hall
And quiet walks
Upon the mall...
Such memories,
Fond souvenirs
Are ribbon and bow
Binding schooltime years.

--Mary R. Hurley

I gaze with hope and pride and joy
Upon my graduating boy,
And know a sudden mute relief
As deep as love, as sharp as grief:
Sharing his victory today,
I graduate from PTA!

--Eleanor Graham Vance

Graduation day is tough for adults. They get to the ceremony as parents. They come home as contemporaries. After twenty-two years of child-rearing, they are unemployed.

--Erma Bombeck

I've never seen anyone put their GPAs on their tombstone. You know, 'Here lies Larry, 4.1.' That's not what matters at the end of life. It matters what kind of man or woman you were.

--Larry Ruby

An educated man earns more. And it seldom takes over ten years after graduating to get educated.

--Unknown

You cannot study for us every day.
The knowledge that you give us will not stream
On our young minds in one bright, blinding ray
But you can plant a dream.

You can plant a dream in our young hearts
A dream of excellence whose light will gleam
Upon our pathways as the years depart
Your words can plant a dream.

To sow a dream and see it spread and grow
To light a lamp and watch its brightness gleam
Here is a gift that is divine I know--
To give a child a dream.

--Unknown

Go forth and do well, but most importantly, go forth and do good.

--Minor Myers, Jr.

Now hold on a second—this is just eighth grade. So, let's not go over the top. Let's not have a huge party. Let's just give them a handshake. You're *supposed* to graduate from eighth grade.

--Barack Obama

I wish you the joy of a purposeful life. I wish you new worlds and the vision to see them. I wish you the decency and the nobility of which you are capable.

--Jonathan Daniels, VMI
Valedictorian

Afoot and light hearted. I take to the open road. Healthy, free, the world before me.
The long brown path before me leading wherever I choose.

--Walt Whitman

Congratulations, Graduates. Welcome to the soulless, life suck of adulthood.

—Larry Wilmore

Graduation Speech: I'd like to thank the internet, Google, Wikipedia, Microsoft Word, and Copy Paste....

—quoteswarehouse.com

11 THINGS YOU DID NOT AND WILL NOT LEARN IN SCHOOL!

Rule 1: Life is not fair - get used to it!

Rule 2: The world won't care about your self-esteem.

The world will expect you to accomplish something BEFORE you feel good about yourself.

Rule 3: You will NOT make \$60,000 a year right out of high school. You won't be a vice-president with a car phone until you earn both.

Rule 4: If you think your teacher is tough, wait till you get a boss.

Rule 5: Flipping burgers is not beneath your dignity.

Your Grandparents had a different word for burger flipping: they called it opportunity.

Rule 6: If you mess up, it's not your parents' fault, so don't whine about your mistakes, learn from them.

Rule 7: Before you were born, your parents weren't as boring as they are now. They got that way from paying your bills, cleaning your clothes and listening to you talk about how cool you thought you were. So before you save the rain forest from the parasites of your parent's generation, try delousing the closet in your own room.

Rule 8: Your school may have done away with winners and losers, but life HAS NOT. In some schools, they have abolished failing grades and they'll give you as MANY TIMES as you want to get the right answer. This doesn't bear the slightest resemblance to ANYTHING in real life.

Rule 9: Life is not divided into semesters. You don't get summers off and very few employers are interested in helping you FIND YOURSELF. Do that on your own time.

Rule 10: Television is NOT real life. In real life people actually have to leave the coffee shop and go to jobs.

Rule 11: Be nice to nerds. Chances are you'll end up working for one.

—Bill Gates

Graduation is only a concept. In real life every day you graduate. Graduation is a process that goes on until the last day of your life. If you can grasp that, you'll make a difference.

—Arie Pencovici

Graduation...
Time to
look back on my
past...remember
all the fun and
friends that
made the years
so special.

The years
have moved
quickly as snow
it's time to say
good bye.

Tomorrow
I will look
forward to
promises and
adventures that
are ahead.

I will keep on
dreaming
and go where
the wind
takes me.

—Unknown

Colleges and insane asylums both are mental institutions in a way. But one has to show some improvement to graduate from an asylum.

—Unknown

Yes, the lectures are optional. Graduation is also optional.

--Bob Bickford

Graduation

Can be either the greatest moment or the saddest.

I thought it would be the greatest but looking back I would give up everything just for one day back in school.

Crushes, unfairness, homework, love, friends, idiot teachers, recess, lunch, all that stuff.

I miss it all.

I find it strange to be looking back right now on this,

But I guess the saying they say is true...

You never knew how much fun being a kid really was until you're older.

I miss school. There—said it.

—*Urban Dictionary*

To all the high school grads...Congratulations on getting through the easiest part of life.

—*someecards.com*

After an oddly moving blast of 'Pomp and Circumstance' on a hot morning, there it is: childhood's end. The summer is a strange, liminal time, and then the cars are loaded up, the airplanes boarded, and the parents stand on green lawns in college towns and say goodbye. Now the teenagers are far from home, with only the remembered counsel of the people who love them most to help them negotiate what lies ahead.

—Caitlin Flanagan

You will leave here with knowledge and a diploma, but what will endure the longest are your friends.

—Seth Meyers

That's what we're all about at Northwestern—do it well while you're here and do it exceptionally well even after you leave.

--Drew Pariano

Today's kids inhabit a world where the cultural hype they have been fed at home and at school about how wonderful they are is about to meet a rude comedown. The anthem they will hear after the champagne corks pop at graduation is not so much American the beautiful as American the beaten. Bowed down by a decade's worth of college debt, these kids are going to have to be pretty special—and very lucky—to live anywhere near as well as their parents did. And nothing about their upbringing prepared them for this.

--Tina Brown

Let's face it—you are the cheapest labor this side of Mexico. Companies realize this and are going to exploit it. You are educated, enthusiastic, teachable and willing to work hard. They are trying to increase revenues yet keep costs low. You are part of the low-cost equation.

—Bradley G. Richardson

America's most elite educational institutions just aren't playing fair. The kids who make it into those rarefied colleges and universities are likely to be graded more leniently than in other institutions. In 2001, Harvard was embarrassed by the revelation that 90 percent of its students graduated with honors.

--Don Moore

Members of the Graduating Class: You who are about to receive your diplomas should also receive an apology from this university -- and a refund of a large portion of the tuition you have paid. You have been cheated, bilked, propagandized and badly educated. Your tuition has been much too costly, for which you can blame the federal government and the avarice of the university.

—George Will

Those of you who majored in gender studies --
or women's studies --
or ethnicity studies --
or cinema deconstruction --
or any other of today's academic fads --
to you, I have this advice:

When this commencement ceremony is over and you take off your cap and gown, do not bother looking for a job. Instead, go straight to the unemployment office. This university did not equip you to add value to the American economy.

—George Will

An amazing thing I saw in the *New York Times* was that at college graduations in the last month, the most popular speakers have been television anchormen and anchorwomen. When I went to school, at graduation you wanted to see a famous poet, a famous theologian, a famous philosopher. And now they want to see some idiot who reads the news off the TelePrompTer.

—James Warren

American high schools turn out 700,000 graduates each year who are unable to read their own diplomas.

—*Training Magazine*

Curriculum, examinations, commencement, degrees are all part of the same system; they are all inherited from the Middle Ages, and in some form they go back to the twelfth century.

--Charles Homer Haskins

True education enrolls men at the cradle and graduates them at the grave.

--Unknown

Imagine, for a moment, if Americans transferred our obsessive intensity about high-school sports—the rankings, the trophies, the ceremonies, the pride—to high-school academics. We would look not so different from South Korea, or Japan, or any of a handful of Asian countries whose hypercompetitive, pressure-cooker approach to academics in many ways mirrors the American approach to sports. Both approaches can be dysfunctional; both set kids up for stress and disappointment. The difference is that 93 percent of South Korean students graduate from high school, compared with just 77 percent of American students—only about 2 percent of whom receive athletic scholarships to college.

--Amanda Ripley

Education is ongoing, never complete. A headstone will be my diploma.

—Lawrence Levine

The fireworks begin today. Each diploma is a lighted match. Each one of you is a fuse.

—Edward Koch

You are educated. Your certification is in your degree. You may think of it as the ticket to the good life. Let me ask you to think of an alternative. Think of it as your ticket to change the world.

—Tom Brokaw

Life is my college. May I graduate well, and earn some honors!

—Louisa May Alcott

Your education is a dress rehearsal for a life that is yours to lead.

—Nora Ephron

You don't go to university so you can punch a clock. You go to university so you can be in a position to make a difference.

—Janet Napolitano

The tassel's worth the hassle.

—Unknown

Now that you've graduated, just remember: Bosses don't usually accept notes from your mother.

—Melanie White

Never go to your high school reunion pregnant or they will think that is all you have done since you graduated.

—Erma Bombeck

The college graduate is presented with a sheepskin to cover his intellectual nakedness.

—Robert M. Hutchins

At commencement you wear your square-shaped mortarboards. My hope is that from time to time you will let your minds be bold, and wear sombreros.

—Paul Freund

It's not your blue blood, your pedigree or your college degree. It's what you do with your life that counts.

—Millard Fuller

The future lies before you like a field of driven snow, be careful how you tread it, for every step will show.

—Unknown

Commencement speeches were invented largely in the belief that outgoing college students should never be released into the world until they have been properly sedated.

—Garry Trudeau

Your schooling may be over, but remember that your education still continues.

—Unknown

The trouble with learning from experience is that you never graduate.

—Doug Larson

Follow your passion, stay true to yourself, never follow someone else's path. Unless you're in the woods and you're lost and you see a path, then by all means you should follow that... Be true to yourself and everything will be fine.

—Ellen DeGeneres

I learned law so well, the day I graduated I sued the college, won the case, and got my tuition back.

—Fred Allen

It takes most men five years to recover from a college education, and to learn that poetry is as vital to thinking as knowledge.

—Brooks Atkinson

Just about a month from now I'm set adrift, with a diploma for a sail and lots of nerve for oars.

—Richard Halliburton

The truth is, I was afraid the day I walked into Stanford. And I was afraid the day I walked out.

—Carly Fiorina

We don't stop going to school when we graduate.

—Carol Burnett

When you leave here, don't forget why you came.

—Adlai Stevenson

You cannot help but learn more as you take the world into your hands. Take it up reverently, for it is an old piece of clay, with millions of thumbprints on it.

—John Updike

Do not follow where the path may lead. Go, instead, where there is no path and leave a trail.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

U.S. taxpayers could reap \$45 billion a year if the number of high school dropouts were cut in half. The savings would be achieved via extra tax revenues; reduced costs of public health, crime, and justice; and decreased welfare payments.,

—Henry M. Levine

Being a high school graduate is associated with a 40 percent lower probability of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families; a 1 percent lower probability of receiving housing assistance; and a 19 percent lower probability of receiving food stamps. For college graduates, the probability reductions are 62 percent, 35 percent, and 54 percent.

—Henry M. Levine

This graduation ceremony marks a significant moment in the lives of these young people. It is the end of their elementary education and the beginning of a higher level of education at the high school—an education that will prepare them for life after school. This occasion marks the end of childhood for these students. Moms—when these student leave this room tonight, they will no longer be children—they will no longer be your babies—they will be young adults. This ceremony is a rite of passage for these students—passage into a more difficult, more challenging, more rewarding phase of their lives.

—Dan L. Miller

‘Why do we have to wear those funny robes and the hats with the board on top?’ How many times have you heard that question? And, how many times have you wished there was a better answer than, ‘Because it’s a tradition, that’s why.’ Well, many people (and not just high school seniors) have no real idea of the significance and the history behind the cap and gown. Contrary to the popular belief of graduates, the cap and gown is not a last ditch effort by the teachers and administrators to make them look foolish in front of a crowd. It is, rather an honor and distinction that dates back to the 13th and 14th centuries

In the Middle Ages, scholars were nearly always associated with a church or monastery. Even though they were not necessarily monks or priests themselves, they adopted the dress of the cleric: a long gown or *cassock*, a tunic or *tabard* over it and a cloak with a hood or *liripipe*. These garments signified a man of learning... and in those days, it was *always* men...whether student or teacher.

By the end of the 16th century, however, these simple clothes had undergone many changes, eventually evolving into a distinctive academic costume. In England, the source of most of our traditions, the hood fell into disuse as skull caps became fashionable...which were, in turn replaced, by the biretta.

Fashionable scholars tried to outdo each other with larger and larger birettas until, at last, they had to be stuffed with cardboard to keep them from falling down in front of their faces. Voila...the birth of the mortarboard! The old hoods remained, however, becoming a decorative symbol of the attainment of higher degrees. Today these are the distinctive and colorful Bachelor, Master and Doctor hoods which signify both degree and academic discipline.

—Charles R. Fultz, *Herff Jones, Inc.*

The U.S. is stagnating while other industrialized countries are surpassing us. And that is going to have a dramatic impact on our ability to compete. In fact, the United States is now the only industrialized country where young people are less likely than their parents to earn a diploma.

—Anna Habash

Schools are structured in a manner that allows us to deliver a wealth of information and ideas to young people who lack our experience of and sophistication about the world. For the most part, educators assume that, if we cover something, the students have learned it. We talk, they listen. We present, they absorb. At the end of a year, when we have covered everything according to our plan, the students are deemed ready for the next level—at least most of them are. In some cases, students who do not make progress are subjected to another year of the same material, usually presented in the same way, usually with the same books, and often with the same teachers. Then, if they fail for a second time, we usually move them ahead anyway, because keeping them back at this point makes even less sense.

—Ted Sizer

Dear Graduate,

In a short while you will pass an important milestone in your life.

Graduation. It marks the end of high school . . . and the beginning of a promising future.

But more importantly, graduation marks achievement. You are about to join the distinguished ranks of people throughout history who have proudly marched through the commencement ceremony ... a ceremony of honor and recognition of educational status. You've earned the rights and privileges due a high school graduate. You've succeeded where many have failed.

You've every right to be proud.

The cap and gown you will wear is your mark of distinction. It links you to generations of scholars and students, and a history that dates back over 600 years. Caps and gowns have many colors, shapes and designs and, as you look at those worn by the faculty and administrators, you'll see that each gown worn signifies that faculty member's degrees and honors. As you don your cap and gown, remember that it symbolizes your own academic achievement, and connects you with the past.. . and future. Wear them with pride.

As faculty and administrators, we're proud of your accomplishment, too. Your success reflects on our high standards and dedication to you , . . and your success shines brightly.

Congratulations.

—Charles R. Fultz, *Herff Jones, Inc.*

As students walk across the stage tonight to receive their diplomas, we are offering them about five seconds of individual glory. It would be best if each student's five seconds were dignified. This is a ceremony honoring our students, and rather than applauding or cheering each student as they cross the stage, it would be best to save the applause for the conclusion of the ceremony. Believe it or not, most of these students are easily embarrassed, and I'd like not to detract from their appearance on the stage.

—Dan L. Miller

One should be aware of such false goals as merely making high grades. A high grade may reflect your competence in a particular subject, or it may only indicate your proficiency in gradesmanship, a skill in selecting easy courses or an ability to charm teachers. No harm in that, of course, but not at the cost of overlooking the true justification for spending your irreplaceable time in the classroom. As you progress through life, your college grades will become less and less meaningful; your need to learn will ever be with you and your skill in LEARNING HOW TO LEARN will always be important.

—Dr. Arnold O. Beckman

Commencement. Used with graduation, one would think it means end, but, coming from the French, commencement actually means beginning. Describing the end of high school as 'beginning' may seem odd, but both commencement and graduation are appropriate names.

Graduation signifies the end of four years. The years were easy for some, hard for others, fun for most and terrible for a few. Just about any adjective can describe the four years spent in high school.

Graduation means an end to the most carefree time of our lives, but commencement is just the beginning to what lies ahead to our futures, be it studying in college, working 9 to 5, marrying, having babies, going all the way up into our golden years. Graduation is an end to what are called the best years of our lives, but the independence commencement brings lurks round the corner.

So as we leave high school for the last time, at least for now, we bid farewell to all of the teachers and staff who have helped us over the years, and all the friends we hope to keep in touch with, wherever time may take us. We'll always remember where we spent the springtime of our lives that Graduation will end in preparation for the summer and the future of Commencement

—Regina Urbanowicz

These past four years have been like one long roller coaster ride. Sometime during each year, month, week, or day, we have all had hills to climb, we have all encountered unexpected twists, and we have all been thrown for a loop or two. High school life in many ways can be as frightening and as exhilarating as any roller coaster that has been or can ever be created.

Regardless of the situation, we have been fortunate that our counselors, teachers, and friends have been able to serve as a safety bar or seat belt we could rely on for support and security throughout the ride.

As the ride began, some of us held onto that safety bar for dear life, while others had a slightly looser grip, but either way, at the time, we all had to climb what appeared to be the steepest, toughest, and longest hill imaginable.

Now, as senior year has come to a close, it is time to lift up those safety bars and unfasten the seat belts that we have relied on for the past four years: this ride is over! Whether we have plans to attend college or work after graduation does not matter, everyday life itself, is a never ending ride, filled with constant anticipation, anxiety, fear, and excitement. Yes, it is now time to exit this ride, and step in line for the next. Our next ride will probably be as frightening and as challenging as this one at first; however we will all have much more experience under our belt to help guide us.

—Julianne Yasey

Imagine life as a series of glass doors. At this moment, we are closing and locking the door of high school behind us. We can look back through this transparent door and reminisce about the many memories, but we cannot open it and go back into the past. We must look ahead and look for the keys that will unlock upcoming doors. In order to enter these doors, we need to learn, and this learning comes from a desire from within.

We must take the responsibility to learn and work and take an active part in the outcome of our lives, instead of waiting and hoping for our lives to progress as we dream they will. We should be in control of our destiny. We must hold strong, honest beliefs and values, and stand firmly within them. Remember to feel strongly because we are our feelings. Life is like finely tuning a very expensive car. It should start instantly and be guided intelligently over smooth or rough roads. Don't let your machine rust! Feed it with quality learning. Be confident! Set goals for as smooth a trip as possible. Don't let your feelings create a reckless driver and cause your downfall. Be aware of dangers and learn self control. But control does not mean that our lives will be easy. The world will teach us some lessons: some will be kind, some will be sorrowful, but we must meet the challenge, conquer it, and grow strong.

—Byung Kang

Hold it proudly, the furled diploma,
unfurling in your mind
the turning pages of days;
their marching print, the scenes
in corridors and classrooms—and the faces;
the thoughts and dreams
that stood on tiptoe reaching,
the delicate balance between
yearning and learning.
Hold it proudly—
and take the aisle smiling.

--Virginia Real Nicholas

Sweet halls of ivy, though it seems
We leave with eagerness
To meet fulfillment of our dreams—
The future to possess,
You are an everlasting part
Of every mind, of every heart.
We would not now turn back...and yet,
The trials and triumphs, smiles and tears,
The memories gathered through the years
We never will forget.

--Barbara Burrow

What is that you hold in your hand?
Nothing, you say? Look again.
Every hand holds some special gift—
A hammer, a broom, a pen,
A hoe, a scalpel, an artist's brush,
A needle, a microscope,
A violin's bow, a way with words
In the giving of faith and hope.
What is that you hold in your hand?

Whatever your gift may be,
It can open your door to abundant life—
You hold in your hand the key.

--Helen Lowrie Marshall

We should do away with most course requirements, make all courses rigorous, and simply report what students have accomplished from year to year. Students should prepare for adult life by studying subjects that suit their talents, passions, and aspirations as well as needs. They should leave when they are judged to be ready for whatever next challenge they take on—whether it be college, trade school, the military, or playing in a band. Let’s therefore abolish the diploma, if by diploma we mean that all students must graduate as though they were heading for the same 20th-century future.

—Grant Wiggins

The consequences of using high-stakes tests to grant or withhold high school diplomas may be positive or negative. For example, if high-stakes graduation tests motivate students to work harder in school, the result may be increased learning for those who pass the test and maybe even for those who fail. Similarly, if high-stakes tests give teachers and other educators guidance on what knowledge and skills are most important for students to learn, that may improve curriculum and instruction. Minimum competency tests do appear to have affected instruction by increasing the amount of class time spent on basic skills, but available evidence about the possible effects of graduation tests on learning and on high school dropout rates is inconclusive.

❑ Recommendation: High-school graduation decisions are inherently certification decisions; the diploma should certify that the student has achieved acceptable levels of learning. Tests and other information used for this purpose should afford each student a fair opportunity to demonstrate the required levels of knowledge and skill in accordance with psychometric standards for certification tests.

❑ Recommendation: Graduation tests should provide evidence of mastery of material taught. Thus, there is a need for evidence that the test content is representative of what students have been taught.

Recommendation: Students who are at risk of failing a graduation test should be advised of their situation well in advance and provided with appropriate instruction that would improve their chances of passing.

—*High Stakes: Testing
for Tracking,
Promotion, and
Graduation*

Time passes.
Will you?

—Unknown

The ivy clings to the tower wall
As we stroll for the last time down the mall.
It's a time when fond farewells are said,
Time to dream of the years ahead.
Yet even if we drift apart,
As years pass by, we know each heart
Will cling to these friends, dearest of all,
As ivy clings to the tower wall.

--Mary A. Loberg

When I was a congressman, I had occasion to talk to this group of students who were taking their seat. There were about 80 of them and I asked them, 'How many of you will be serving in the country once you graduate?' And, out of the 80, there were two that raised their hands. The rest were thinking of leaving.

—Benigno Aquino III

Senioritis (n.) A crippling disease that strikes high school seniors. Symptoms: laziness, an over-excessive wearing of track pants, and sweatshirts. Lack of studying, repeated absences, and a dismissive attitude. The only known cure is a phenomenon known as Graduation.

—*Urban Dictionary*

Currently, only 70 percent of our high school students earn diplomas with their peers, and less than one-third of our high school students graduate prepared for success in a four-year college.

—Ruben Hinojosa

Classics are works of such depth and importance you have to read them. Literally. To graduate, you have to read them.

--*Earth (The Book) A
Visitor's Guide to
the Human Race*

With our diplomas from eighth grade, Mr. Dorman handed each of us a small buff card, our first adult library card, a symbol marking the end of childhood.

--Beverly Cleary

A commencement is a time of joy. It is also a time of melancholy. But then again, so is life.

—Paul Tsongas

Approximately 1,000 high school students will drop out with each hour that passes in a school day in America. This means that 30 percent of the class of 2007, or 1.2 million students, were estimated to have dropped out last year. The high school dropout crisis has received significant recent attention from researchers, policy makers and the media. It has been widely reported that one in three boys, and nearly 50 percent or more of some racial and ethnic groups of boys, will fail to graduate from high school with a diploma in four years. This is an alarming finding that demands prompt remedial action. What has been generally overlooked, however, is that girls, too, are dropping out of high school at dangerously high rates. In fact, one in four girls overall do not finish high school, and the numbers are worse for girls of color. One in two Native American female students, four in ten Black female students, and nearly four in ten Hispanic female students fail to graduate with a diploma each year. There are significant costs to be paid by both the individual and the nation as a whole for each and every student who drops out of high school. In general, dropouts face significant challenges to obtaining employment and achieving economic security. Female dropouts are at particular economic risk. As compared to their male peers, girls who fail to graduate from high school have higher rates of unemployment; make significantly lower wages; and are more likely to need to rely on public support programs to provide for their families. With so many students dropping out of high school each year, the aggregate drain on our nation's economy—through foregone income tax revenue and increased public spending—is substantial. At a time when every hour counts, the dropout rates and educational experiences of female students cannot be ignored.

—*National Women's Law
Center*

Dropping out of school is a multi-generational problem. Not only are students who drop out of school likely to suffer the personal consequences of dropping out, such as lower lifetime income and worse overall health, but they are also more likely to see their own children drop out of school and suffer the same consequences. In addition, although children are particularly at risk of dropping out themselves in families where one or both parents are high school dropouts, the educational level of mothers may make a greater difference. A recent study of female students found that while the daughters of men who graduate from high school are 15% less likely to drop out of school than daughters whose fathers dropped out, the daughters of women who graduate from high school are one-third less likely to drop out of school than daughters of women who dropped out.

—*National Women's Law
Center*

As efforts to remedy the high school dropout crisis progress, the educational experiences and dropout rates of female students must be recognized and understood. American girls are dropping out of high school at nearly the same rate as boys, and at significant cost. Female dropouts earn significantly lower wages than male dropouts, are at greater risk of unemployment, and are more likely to need to rely on public support programs. Moreover, studies suggest that barriers to high school graduation affect girls and boys in different ways and that some risk factors—particularly those related to pregnancy and parenting—are significantly more burdensome for female students. Further gender-based research and the incorporation of that research into dropout intervention strategies will be vital to improving girls' graduation rates. With the future economic security of so many young women and their families at risk, educators, researchers and policymakers cannot afford to ignore the demonstrated particularities of girls' educational experiences. Our young women deserve no less.

—*National Women's Law
Center*

To graduate from a public high school in Chicago, students will soon have to meet a new and unusual requirement: They must show that they've secured a job or received a letter of acceptance to college, a trade apprenticeship, a gap year program or the military.

Mayor Rahm Emanuel said he wants to make clear that the nation's third-largest school system is not just responsible for shepherding teenagers to the end of their senior year, but also for setting them on a path to a productive future.

'We are going to help kids have a plan, because they're going to need it to succeed,' he said. 'You cannot have kids think that 12th grade is done.'

—Emma Brown

Graduates, you have an important task to perform because behind you are your parents and guardians. Two or three or four years ago, they drove into Cardigan, dropped you off, helped you get settled and then turned around and drove back out the gates. It was an extraordinary sacrifice for them. They drove down the trail of tears back to an emptier and lonelier house. They did that because the decision about your education, they knew, was about you. It was not about them. That sacrifice and others they made have brought you to this point. But this morning is not just about you. It is also about them, so I hope you will stand up and turn around and give them a great round of applause. Please.

—Supreme Court Justice
John Roberts

From time to time in the years to come, I hope you will be treated unfairly, so that you will come to know the value of justice. I hope that you will suffer betrayal because that will teach you the importance of loyalty. Sorry to say, but I hope you will be lonely from time to time so that you don't take friends for granted. I wish you bad luck, again, from time to time so that you will be conscious of the role of chance in life and understand that your success is not completely deserved and that the failure of others is not completely deserved either. And when you lose, as you will from time to time, I hope every now and then, your opponent will gloat over your failure. It is a way for you to understand the importance of sportsmanship. I hope you'll be ignored so you know the importance of listening to others, and I hope you will have just enough pain to learn compassion. Whether I wish these things or not, they're going to happen. And whether you benefit from them or not will depend upon your ability to see the message in your misfortunes.

—Supreme Court Justice
John Roberts

The future of the world belongs to the youth of the world, and it is from the youth and not from the old that the fire of life will warm and enlighten the world. It is your privilege to breathe the breath of life into the dry bones of many around you.

—Tom Mann

1. The more you read, the more you know;
2. the more you know, the smarter you grow;
3. the smarter you are, the longer you stay in school and the more diplomas you earn;
4. the more diplomas you have, the more days you are employed;
5. the more diplomas you have, the more your children will achieve in school;
6. and the more diplomas you have, the longer you will live.

The converse, therefore, would also be true:

1. The less you read, the less you know;
2. the less you know, the sooner you drop out of school;
3. the sooner you drop out, the sooner and longer you will be unemployed;
4. the sooner you drop out, the greater your chances of going to jail.

--Jim Trelease

For too many parents and their children, acceptance by an elite institution isn't just another challenge, just another goal. A yes or no from Amherst or the University of Virginia or the University of Chicago is seen as the conclusive measure of a young person's worth, an incontestable harbinger of the accomplishments or disappointments to come. Winner or loser: This is when judgement is made.

—Frank Bruni

Imagine if you had genuine, high-quality early-childhood education for every child, and suddenly every black child in America...is getting a really good education. And they're graduating from high school at the same rates that whites are, and they are going to college at the same rates that whites are, and they are able to afford college at the same rates because the government has universal programs that say that you're not going to be barred from school just because of how much money your parents have.

So now they're all graduating. And let's also say that the Justice Department and the courts are making sure, as I've said in a speech before, that when Jamal sends his résumé in, he's getting treated the same as when Johnny sends his résumé in. Now, are we going to have suddenly the same number of CEOs, billionaires, etc., as the white community? In 10 years? Probably not, maybe not even in 20 years.

But I guarantee you that we would be thriving, we would be succeeding. We wouldn't have huge numbers of young African American men in jail. We'd have more family formation as college-graduated girls are meeting boys who are their peers, which then in turn means the next generation of kids are growing up that much better. And suddenly you've got a whole generation that's in a position to start using the incredible creativity that we see in music, and sports, and frankly even on the streets, channeled into starting all kinds of businesses. I feel pretty good about our odds in that situation.

—Barack Obama

To the wrongs that need resistance,
To the right that needs assistance,
To the future in the distance,
Give yourselves.

—Carrie Chapman Catt

Youngsters who are retained once have only a 50% chance of finishing high school. Those retained twice generally do not graduate.

—Martin Haberman

Today in an auditorium full of parents my son scanned the room looking for me. When he saw me his face lit up the room. He wasn't looking for the perfect parent. He was looking of his mom. Don't ever forget the power of simply being their mom.

—Rachel Marie Martin

Asked to deliver the convocation speech for graduating seniors at Syracuse University in 2013, he [George Saunders] anticipated exactly what the more cynical readers (or in this case, listeners) might have on their minds.

'Down through the ages,' he told the assembled crowd of restless students, 'a traditional form has evolved for this type of speech, which is: Some old fart, his best years behind him, who, over the course of his life, has made a series of dreadful mistakes (that would be me), gives heartfelt advice to a group of shining, energetic young people, with all of their best years ahead of them (that would be you)—and I intend to respect that tradition.'

—Dinty W. Moore

Commencement speakers have a good deal in common with grandfather clocks. Standing usually some six feet tall, typically ponderous in construction, more traditional than functional, their distinction is largely their noisy communication of essentially commonplace information.

—W. Willard Wirtz

No One Gets A Diploma Alone.

—*adcouncil.org*

GRADUATION SPEECHES

Several students will be selected this year to deliver speeches at the promotion exercise. A contest will be held, and those students writing speeches judged to be the best will deliver them.

GUIDELINES FOR SPEECHWRITING:

- The speech should be 2-3 minutes long.
- The speech should be written neatly in ink on one side only of each sheet of paper.
- The topic of this speech is of your own choosing. Use your imagination. It should be appropriate for a graduation, and you should say whatever you feel would be interesting, meaningful, and useful for your classmates to hear at this point in their lives. (Don't hesitate to ask for advice from parents and teachers.)

- The first page of the speech should be totally blank except for your name in the upper right-hand corner. Do not put your name on any other page.
- Staple the pages together.
- Turn the speech in to the principal's office by the end of school on Monday, May 18.

I would ask that Language Arts teachers review these guidelines with their students and discuss the writing of the speech. I would ask that other teachers encourage students to enter the contest and offer whatever ideas or advice they can.

I also need a group of teachers to volunteer to read and judge the speeches. I also need some volunteer teachers to work with the winning speakers during the week prior to promotion to help them rewrite, polish, and practice their speeches. Please let me know if you wish to help out.

—Dan L. Miller

The funniest part about my graduation will be my parents finding out I'm not an Engineering major anymore.

—Internet Meme

After a few years Samuel's university decided that it had shone long enough in the reflected glory of his neckties, so they declaimed to him in Latin, charged him ten dollars for the paper which proved him irretrievably educated, and sent him into the turmoil with much self-confidence, a few friends and the proper assortment of harmless bad habits.

—F. Scott Fitzgerald

IT TAKES A VILLAGE

I DID IT!

Success!
Honor Roll.
Joy rocked my soul
As festive tears flowed free.

I DID IT!

With Dad, who sweat daily near the lathe.
With Mom, who nightly wrapped me 'round with body, arms, and books.

With Teacher, who proved to me I could be more.
With Lunch Lady Laurie, who oversaw my allergies to food.
With Custodian Clark, who hovered near to ward off bullies.
With Biscuit, who wagged and licked and cuddled her support.

I DID IT!

—Dan L. Miller

In 1970, when the golden age of the American middle class was nearing its peak and inequality was at its nadir, only about half of Americans ages 25 and older had a high-school degree or the equivalent. Today, 90 percent do. Meanwhile, the proportion of Americans attaining a college degree has more than tripled since 1970.

—Nick Hanauer (2019)