

**Using (20-minute) Time Blocks
to Encourage Independent Study
for High School Homeschooled Students**

by Tammy D. Choleva

Introduction

Let's face it, not every student is cut from the same cookie cutter. This goes for public, private, and homeschooled students. Some students need the freedom to explore subjects that interest them, using resource types that engage them according to their own learning styles. This obviously is more feasible with homeschooled students.

Even though homeschooling parents have more leeway to encourage independent study among their students, not all homeschooling parents are comfortable letting their children engage in total independent study without having some guidelines to follow. With this in mind, I set up a Time Block system. A goal of the system is to encourage independent study among high school homeschooled students, while providing those students with basic guidelines, in order to ensure the students are meeting minimum graduation goals and requirements. This system was inspired by an article called, "Hate of Learning: One Cause and a Possible Remedy," by Andrew Pudewa. This article appeared in the April 2012 issue of *The Old Schoolhouse Magazine* at the following web page: <http://www.thehomeschoolmagazine-digital.com/thehomeschoolmagazine/201204#pg139> .

Incidentally, even though this system was set up with high school homeschooled students in mind, a modified version can be used with junior high homeschooled students as well. Additionally, this system can be modified for students who are not so inclined to want to engage in independent study, but who also do not work well with regimented (e.g., textbook) learning. In the latter case, this system can be used by the homeschooling parent to help guide him/her in creating more individualized lesson plans for the student using a variety of resources.

On a final note, this system was devised with Connecticut high school graduation requirements in mind. If your state's requirements are different, you will need to adjust the plan accordingly. The information on Connecticut's high school graduation requirements was obtained from pages 32, 33 & 35 of Substitute Senate Bill No. 438: Public Act No. 10-111 at <http://www.cga.ct.gov/2010/ACT/Pa/pdf/2010PA-00111-R00SB-00438-PA.pdf> , page 11 of *The Connecticut Plan: Academic and Personal Success for Every Middle and High School Student* at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/pressroom/TheConnecticutPlan.pdf> , and page 2 of "Connecticut's Plan for Secondary School Reform: Key Elements of Connecticut's Plan for Secondary School Reform" at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/ssreform/ssreformbrochure.pdf> . Each of these documents is also linked at Connecticut's State Department of Education web page at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2702&Q=322264> . Furthermore, Connecticut does have proposed educational reforms beginning with the high school graduating class of 2018 that will likely affect this document.

Instructions

1. Connecticut high school students graduating with classes 2004 through 2017 must complete a minimum of 20 high school credits. Beginning with the graduating class of 2018, the number of credits will increase to a minimum of 25. For the State of Connecticut, "...a credit shall consist of not less than the equivalent of a forty-minute class period for each school day of a school year..." (page 35 of Substitute Senate Bill No. 438: Public Act No. 10-111 at <http://www.cga.ct.gov/2010/ACT/Pa/pdf/2010PA-00111-R00SB-00438-PA.pdf>). Since there are 180 school days in a year, this means the Connecticut student must have completed a minimum of 7,200 minutes (or 120 hours) of class period time in a particular course to have earned one credit; a half (½) credit is earned after a minimum of 60 hours of class period time; while a quarter (¼) credit is earned after a minimum of 30 hours of class period time.

This system is based on 20-minute Time Blocks. For the CT 2004-2017 high school graduate to achieve the minimum goal of earning 20 high school credits, this translates as follows: **Ten 20-minute Time Blocks per day** \times 180 days per year = 36,000 minutes per year = 600 hours per year; $600 \text{ hours} \div 120 \text{ credit hours per credit} = 5 \text{ credits per year}$ or 20 credits for grades 9-12. For the CT 2018 and beyond high school graduate to achieve the minimum goal of earning 25 high school credits, this translates as follows: **Twelve 20-minute Time Blocks per day** \times 180 days per year = 43,200 minutes per year = 720 hours per year; $720 \text{ hours} \div 120 \text{ credit hours per credit} = 6 \text{ credits per year}$ or 24 credits for grades 9-12; **plus one 1-credit Capstone Project in the senior year** (**two 20-minute Time Blocks per day** \times 180 days = 7,200 minutes = 120 hours for the year = 1 credit for 12th grade) for a total of 25 credits.

2. Have the student set up a school binder for storing completed log sheets (included below) and assignments.
3. Have the student use the following subject codes when completing log sheets.

SUBJECT CODES:

ENG = Bible, Grammar, Spelling, Vocabulary, Writing/Composition, Reading/Literature

MAT = Mathematics

SOC = History, Geography, Citizenship/Government, Economics

LANG = World Language

SCI = Science

ARTS = Fine Arts

VOC = Vocational/Career & Life Skills

P.E. = Physical Education

TECH = Technology

EGN = Engineering

HLTH = Health & Safety

ELEC = Other Electives

CAP = Senior Capstone Project

Instructions (*continued*)

4. In the “Project/Study Description” column, have the student list websites, books, DVD's, etc. used for study, along with a brief description of the topic studied.
5. On separate notebook paper (or using the computer), have the student write at least a one-paragraph description of “something” learned during the study of the topic.
6. Supply the student with a folder in order that the student may submit to the parent for daily review/grading the log sheets, paragraphs, and any finished printable projects/worksheets/tests/quizzes worked on that day. (For bulky projects, take a photo of the project.)
7. At the end of each week, have the student write an essay (about 5 paragraphs) on a topic of his/her choice that he/she studied during the week. (The time spent on the essay can be allocated to either the subject code for the topic being referenced or ENG Composition.) The parent should review the student's essay and hand it back for editing if necessary. For parents who need help editing student essays, consider purchasing a subscription to Vantage Learning My Access! Home Edition at <http://www.vantagelearning.com/login/myaccess-home-edition/> . Before purchasing a subscription, be sure to check <https://www.homeschoolbuyersco-op.org/my-access/?c=1> to see if they are currently offering a deal.
8. After the contents of the daily folder have been reviewed by the parent, have the student file all completed log sheets, paragraphs and essays, projects (or photos), and printable assignment pages in the school binder.
9. For CT students graduating in the years 2004-2017, if the student plans to earn 4 ENG, 4 MAT, 4 SOC, 4 SCI, and 4 ELEC credits from 9th through 12th grades, the student will need to average 2 ENG, 2 MAT, 2 SOC, 2 SCI, and 2 ELEC Time Blocks each day. These numbers will need to be adjusted for students who plan to distribute their credits differently, and for CT students graduating in years beginning 2018.
10. To help the student stay on track for meeting the yearly Time Block and credit goals, the student or parent should complete consolidated weekly log sheets, monthly log sheets, semester log sheets (helpful for creating semester report cards), and a year-end log sheet (helpful for creating a high school transcript).
11. Supply your student with plenty of resources to be able to successfully accomplish independent learning. Include audio, visual, hands-on, on-line, and book resources, as well as field trips, etc.
12. Supply your student with a general checklist (included below), so your student can be sure to cover important main topics within each subject.
13. Supply your student with a list of activity suggestions (included below), so your student does not end up wasting time trying to figure out what to do when studying a particular topic/subject.
14. Issue your student a high school diploma upon his/her home school graduation. See http://www.4himkids.com/generic_diploma.pdf for a sample diploma. (Feel free to email me at teecee@snet.net to ask me to fill in your student's information for you, and I will email a completed copy back to you.)

CT Graduating Classes 2004 through 2017:

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Minimum Credit Requirements</i>	<i>Minimum Class Hours</i>	<i>Minimum # Time Blocks</i>
English	1	120	360
	1	120	360
	1	120	360
	<u>1</u>	<u>120</u>	<u>360</u>
	4 Total	480 Total	1440 Total
Mathematics	1	120	360
	1	120	360
	<u>1</u>	<u>120</u>	<u>360</u>
	3 Total	360 Total	1080 Total
Social Studies	1	120	360
	1	120	360
	½ (Civics/Government)	60	180
	<u>½</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>180</u>
	3 Total	360 Total	1080 Total
Science	1	120	360
	<u>1</u>	<u>120</u>	<u>360</u>
	2 Total	240 Total	720 Total
Arts or Vocational Education	<u>1</u>	<u>120</u>	<u>360</u>
	1 Total	120 Total	360 Total
Physical Education	<u>1</u>	<u>120</u>	<u>360</u>
	1 Total	120 Total	360 Total
Electives	1	120	360
	1	120	360
	1	120	360
	1	120	360
	1	120	360
	<u>1</u>	<u>120</u>	<u>360</u>
	6 Total	720 Total	2160 Total
TOTALS	20	2400	7200

CT Graduating Classes Beginning 2018:

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Minimum Credit Requirements</i>	<i>Minimum Class Hours</i>	<i>Minimum # Time Blocks</i>
Mathematics	1 (Algebra I) 1 (Geometry) 1 (Alg. II or Prob. & Stats.) <u>1</u> 4 <i>Total</i>	120 120 120 <u>120</u> 480 <i>Total</i>	360 360 360 <u>360</u> 1440 <i>Total</i>
Science (w/Lab)	1 (Life/Biology) 1 (Physical/Chemistry) <u>1</u> 3 <i>Total</i>	120 120 <u>120</u> 360 <i>Total</i>	360 360 <u>360</u> 1080 <i>Total</i>
STEM Elective <i>(Science, Technology, Engineering, Math)</i>	<u>1</u> 1 <i>Total</i>	<u>120</u> 120 <i>Total</i>	<u>360</u> 360 <i>Total</i>
English	1 (Literature & Composition) 1 1 <u>1</u> 4 <i>Total</i>	120 120 120 <u>120</u> 480 <i>Total</i>	360 360 360 <u>360</u> 1440 <i>Total</i>
Social Studies	1 (American History) 1 (World Studies) ½ (Civics/Government) <u>½</u> 3 <i>Total</i>	120 120 60 <u>60</u> 360 <i>Total</i>	360 360 180 <u>180</u> 1080 <i>Total</i>
World Languages	1 <u>1</u> 2 <i>Total</i>	120 <u>120</u> 240	360 <u>360</u> 720 <i>Total</i>
Fine Arts <i>(Art, Music, Theater, Dance)</i>	<u>1</u> 1 <i>Total</i>	<u>120</u> 120 <i>Total</i>	<u>360</u> 360 <i>Total</i>
Humanities Elective <i>(English, Social Science, Fine Arts, etc.)</i>	<u>1</u> 1 <i>Total</i>	<u>120</u> 120 <i>Total</i>	<u>360</u> 360 <i>Total</i>
Health & Safety Education	<u>½</u> ½ <i>Total</i>	<u>60</u> 60 <i>Total</i>	<u>180</u> 180 <i>Total</i>
Physical Education	<u>1</u> 1 <i>Total</i>	<u>120</u> 120 <i>Total</i>	<u>360</u> 360 <i>Total</i>
Career & Life Skills	1 <u>1</u> 2 <i>Total</i>	120 <u>120</u> 240	360 <u>360</u> 720 <i>Total</i>
Electives	1 <u>½</u> 1-½ <i>Total</i>	120 <u>60</u> 180 <i>Total</i>	360 <u>180</u> 540 <i>Total</i>
Senior Capstone Project	<u>1</u> 1 <i>Total</i>	<u>120</u> 120 <i>Total</i>	<u>360</u> 360 <i>Total</i>
TOTALS	25	3000	9000

**Student's Senior Year Capstone Project
(CT Graduating Class of 2018 and Beyond)**

Date: _____

Student Name: _____

Time Blocks	Time Start	Time End	Subject Code	Project/Study Description	Grade/ Score <i>(if applicable)</i>
20 min			CAP		
20 min			CAP		

SAMPLE HIGH SCHOOL 4-SEMESTER REPORT CARD

NAME OF SCHOOL Official High School Report Card

Student Information Name: XXXXXX	Gender: XXXX	DOB: XXXXXX	SSN: XXXXXXXXXX	School Information Name: Name of School
Contact Information Address Line 1 Address Line 2 Town/State/Zip Phone: XXX-XXX-XXXX	Parents XXXX XXXX School Entry Date XXXXXX	Anticipated Graduation Date XXXXXX	Contact Information Address Line 1 Address Line 2 Town/State/Zip Phone: XXX-XXX-XXXX	

ACADEMIC YEAR 2004-2005 9th Grade

Semester/Quarter 1	Grd	Partial Crd	Semester/Quarter 2	Grd	Partial Crd
ENG <i>English I</i>	A	0.25			
ENG <i>Biblical Studies of the Old Testament</i>	B+	0.25			
ENG <i>Literary Studies I</i>	B	0.25			
MAT <i>Algebra I</i>	B-	0.25			
SCI <i>Biology</i>	B+	0.25			
SOC <i>World History: Ancient Romans</i>	A-	0.25			
ARTS <i>Ancient Art Studies</i>	A-	0.25			
ARTS <i>Contemporary Praise</i>	A	0.25			
P.E. <i>Baseball, Basketball</i>	A	0.25			
LANG <i>Spanish I</i>	B+	0.25			
Attendance 45/45			Attendance		

Semester/Quarter 3	Grd	Partial Crd	Semester/Quarter 4	Grd	Partial Crd
<div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 50px;"> Attendance </div>					
				Attendance Total Attendance /180	

Grading Scale
 A+ = 96% (3.84) A = 93% (3.72) A- = 90% (3.60) B+ = 86% (3.44) B = 83% (3.32) B- = 80% (3.20)
 C+ = 76% (3.04) C = 73% (2.92) C- = 70% (2.80) P/F = Pass/Fail Course 70% = Min. Pass Grade

This signature certifies that the information in this report card is complete and accurate for the period(s) represented.

Signed Name: _____ Title: Teacher/Administrator
 Printed Name: _____ Date: XXXX

SAMPLE HIGH SCHOOL TRANSCRIPT

NAME OF SCHOOL Official High School Transcript

Student Information				School Information		
Name: XXXXXX	Gender: XXXX	DOB: XXXXXX	SSN: XXXXXXXXXX	Name: Name of School		
Contact Information		Parents		Contact Information		
Address Line 1		XXXX		Address Line 1		
Address Line 2		XXXX		Address Line 2		
Town/State/Zip		School Entry Date		Graduation Date		
Phone: XXX-XXX-XXXX		XXXXXX		XXXXXX		

2004-2005				2005-2006			
	Lvl	Grd	Crd		Lvl	Grd	Crd
ENG <i>English I</i>	9	A	1.00				
ENG <i>Biblical Studies of the Old Testament</i>	9	B+	1.00				
ENG <i>Literary Studies I</i>	9	B	1.00				
MAT <i>Algebra I</i>	9	B-	1.00				
SCI <i>Biology</i>	9	B+	0.75				
SOC <i>World History: Ancient Romans</i>	9	A-	0.75				
ARTS <i>Ancient Art Studies</i>	9	A-	0.25				
ARTS <i>Contemporary Praise</i>	9	A	0.25				
P.E. <i>Baseball, Basketball</i>	9	A	0.50				
LANG <i>Spanish I</i>	9	B+	0.50				
9th Grade GPA XXXX				10th Grade GPA			
Attendance 180/180				Cumulative GPA			
Total Credits Earned 9th Grade 7.00				Attendance			
				Total Credits Earned 10th Grade			
				Total Cumulative Credits			

2006-2007				2007-2008			
	Lvl	Grd	Crd		Lvl	Grd	Crd
11th Grade GPA				12th Grade GPA			
Cumulative GPA				Cumulative GPA			
Attendance				Attendance			
Total Credits Earned 11th Grade				Total Credits Earned 12th Grade			
Total Cumulative Credits				Total Cumulative Credits			

Grading Scale

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This signature certifies that the information in this transcript is complete and accurate for the period(s) represented.

Signed Name: _____
 Printed Name: _____

Title: Teacher/Administrator
 Date: XXXX

General High School Checklist

Check Grade(s) When Studied				
9th	10th	11th	12th	Subjects and Topics
				English/Language Arts
				Bible
				Grammar
				Spelling
				Vocabulary
				Composition
				American Literature
				World Literature
				Poetry
				Plays
				Short Stories
				Novellas
				Novels
				Non-Fiction
				Other Specify:
				Mathematics
				Algebra I
				Algebra II
				Geometry
				Pre-Calculus
				Calculus
				Trigonometry
				Probability & Statistics
				Consumer Math
				Business Math
				Other Specify:

				STEM
				Technology
				Engineering
				Other Specify:
				Social Studies
				History
				U.S. History
				Early America
				American Revolution & New Nation
				Declaration of Independence
				U.S. Constitution
				Bill of Rights
				Westward Expansion
				Civil War & Reconstruction
				Industrialization
				Prohibition
				Roaring 20's
				Women's Suffrage
				Crash of Stock Market
				America in the Great Depression & the New Deal
				America in WWII
				America Post-WWII
				60's to early 70's
				Baby Boom
				Cuban Missile Crisis
				Kennedy
				Space Race
				Civil Rights
				Nixon and Watergate
				Vietnam

				Contemporary America
				America's War on Terrorism
				State History
				World History
				Ancient/Early Civilizations
				Middle Ages
				Renaissance and Reformation
				Revolutionary Age
				Industrial Revolution
				WWI
				WWII
				Modern World
				Cold War
				Korean War
				Vietnam War
				Collapse of Soviet Union
				Middle East Conflicts
				Gulf War
				War in Afghanistan
				War in Iraq
				Current Events
				Other Specify:
				Geography
				Asia
				Africa
				Europe
				Australia/Oceania
				Antarctica
				North America
				United States

				Canada
				Mexico and Middle/Central America
				South America
				Other Specify:
				Government
				Civics/American Government
				Foundations
				Declaration of Independence (also above)
				U.S. Constitution (also above)
				Bill of Rights (also above)
				Branches of Government
				Legislative
				Executive
				Judicial
				Law-Making Process
				Political System
				History of Parties
				Voting
				Electoral College
				State Government
				Local Government
				World Governments
				Historical
				Current
				Christians and Government
				Christians and Politics
				Other Specify:
				Economics
				Global Economy
				Free Enterprise vs. Capitalism

				Socialism vs. Communism
				Interest Rates
				Unemployment
				Inflation
				Depression vs. Recession
				U.S. National Debt
				U.S. Department of the Treasury
				Value of the Dollar, Gold, Silver
				Supply and Demand
				Taxes
				Cash vs. Credit
				Stock Market
				Trade
				Bartering
				Entrepreneurship
				Retirement Funds
				Christians and Finances
				Other Specify:
				World Languages
				Spanish I
				Spanish II
				French I
				French II
				Other Specify:
				Science
				Earth & Space
				Meteorology
				Oceanography
				Geology
				Astronomy

			Other Specify:
			Life/Biology
			Design vs. Evolution
			Microevolution vs. Macroevolution
			Taxonomy
			Zoology
			Botany
			Human Anatomy & Physiology
			Genetics
			Cellular and Molecular Biology
			Ecology
			Other Specify:
			Physical/Chemistry
			Measurements (mass, volume, density, metrics, temperature)
			Matter
			Compounds
			Chemical Changes
			Acids & Bases
			Atoms
			Atomic Structure
			Protons
			Electrons
			Neutrons
			Atomic Mass
			Periodic Table
			Metals
			Alkali Metals
			Alkaline Earth Metals
			Lanthanoids
			Actinoids

				Transition Metals
				Post-Transition Metals
				Nonmetals
				Halogens
				Noble Gases
				Other Nonmetals
				Metalloids
				Other Specify:
				Physical/Physics
				Material Substances
				Simple Machines
				Mechanics
				Dynamics
				Motion
				Energy
				Waves
				Sound
				Light
				Color
				Electricity
				Gravity
				Magnetism
				Nuclear
				Other Specify:
				Fine Arts
				Art
				Music
				Theater
				Dance

			Other Specify:
			Vocational/Career & Life Skills
			Speech & Communication
			Keyboarding
			Computers
			Food
			Fashion
			Home
			Personal Finances
			Child Care & Development
			Car Care
			Photography
			Other Specify:
			Health & Safety
			Nutrition
			Exercise
			Hygiene
			Mental & Emotional Health
			Safety
			First Aid
			Disease
			Drugs, Alcohol & Tobacco
			Relationships & Social Health
			Spiritual Health
			Biblical Perspective
			Other Specify:
			Physical Education
			Basketball
			Baseball

			Football
			Hockey
			Soccer
			Tennis
			Archery
			Cheerleading
			Dance
			Gymnastics
			Other Specify:

Activity Suggestions

1. Go on field trips.
2. Read (textbooks, other books, websites, etc.).

<http://www.4himkids.com/links4homeschooling.html> (includes sites for younger and older grades)

3. Listen to audio CD's.
4. Watch videos and video clips. I highly recommend subscribing to Discovery Education streaming Plus. Before subscribing, be sure to check the following website to see if they are currently offering a deal:

www.homeschoolbuyersco-op.org/discovery-education-streaming-plus/?c=1

5. Write a paragraph/essay/paper, and/or do one of the writing projects mentioned on this website:

<http://www.oklahomahomeschool.com/writingideas.html>

6. Design your own website to be able to share what you learn about various topics/subjects. This can be done as a family (with the student being assigned a page), or individually (with the student being responsible for a website). Either way, the following is an incredibly easy to use free site (which includes your own blog[s]):

<http://education.weebly.com/>

7. Create a puzzle, worksheet, quiz, or test (and answer key). Have your mom, dad, sibling, or grandparent complete the puzzle, etc. Save a copy for yourself to serve as a refresher activity later in the semester. The following sites offer free services:

http://www.discoveryeducation.com/free-puzzlemaker/index.cfm?campaign=flyout_teachers_puzzle

<http://www.proprofs.com/quiz-school/>

<http://www.easytestmaker.com>

8. Create a 3-D project, design/create a board game, and/or do one of the projects mentioned on this website:

<http://www.oklahomahomeschool.com/projectideas.html>

9. Notebook, lapbook, or scrapbook your studies:

<http://www.4himkids.com/notebookinstructions.html>

<http://www.4himkids.com/lapbooking.html>

<http://pinterest.com/heartofwisdom/digital-scrapbook-in-homeschool/>

10. Do experiments and complete lab reports:

Dissection

http://www.guesthollow.com/homeschool/printables/files/dissection_lab.pdf

Experiment

http://www.guesthollow.com/homeschool/printables/files/science_experiment_printable.pdf

Microscope

http://www.guesthollow.com/homeschool/printables/files/microscope_lab_sheet.pdf