

Patriot HS 7 Habits Detailed Descriptions

At Patriot High School, we strive to incorporate the seven habits in all we do. Our mission and vision highlight a student-centered leadership focus. Our advisory classes, which meet for 45 minutes about every other week, are designed to discuss the seven habits and other leadership concepts to help develop our students into well-rounded, productive citizens. Additional information on the seven habits can be found at franklincovey.com.

1 Be Proactive (Be responsible for your behavior, results, and growth) 1

Be Proactive is about taking responsibility for your life. You can't keep blaming everything on your parents or grandparents or teachers. Proactive people recognize that they are "response-able." They don't blame genetics, circumstances, conditions, or conditioning for their behavior. They know they choose their behavior. Reactive people, on the other hand, are often affected by their physical environment. They find external sources to blame for their behavior. If the weather is good, they feel good. If it isn't, it affects their attitude and performance, and they blame the weather. All of these external forces act as stimuli that we respond to. Between the stimulus and the response is your greatest power--you have the freedom to choose your response. One of the most important things you choose is what you say. Your language is a good indicator of how you see yourself. A proactive person uses proactive language--I can, I will, I prefer, etc. A reactive person uses reactive language--I can't, I have to, if only. Reactive people believe they are not responsible for what they say and do--they have no choice. Instead of reacting to or worrying about conditions over which they have little or no control, proactive people focus their time and energy on things they can control.

There are many ways our Patriot students can be proactive. It can be as simple and powerful as starting/doing homework the day it is assigned rather than procrastinating until the night before it is due. If you are interested in sports, being proactive can include spending time practicing and working out, or playing your instrument if you are in the band or orchestra. If someone says something mean to you, rather than responding negatively to that, stay positive and say something nice to someone. Your life doesn't just "happen." You choose happiness. You choose sadness. You choose decisiveness. You choose ambivalence. You choose success. You choose failure. You choose courage. Every situation provides a new choice. And in doing so, it gives you a perfect opportunity to do things differently to produce more positive results.

2 Begin With The End in Mind (Focus time and energy on things that can be controlled) 2

So what do you want to be when you grow up? That question may appear a little trite, or too early to know, but think about it for a moment. Are you, right now, who you want to be? Be honest. Sometimes people find themselves achieving victories that are empty--successes that have come at the expense of things that were far more valuable to them. If your ladder is not leaning against the right wall, every step you take gets you to the wrong place faster. Habit 2 is based on imagination. The ability to envision in your mind what you cannot at present see with your eyes. It is based on the principle that all things are created twice. There is a mental (first) creation, and a physical (second) creation. The physical creation follows the mental, just as a building follows a blueprint. If you don't visualize who you are and what you want in life, then you empower other people and circumstances to shape you and your life by default. It's about connecting again with your own uniqueness and then defining the personal, moral, and ethical guidelines within which you can most happily express and fulfill yourself.

At Patriot High School, we encourage our students to develop a personal mission statement that captures who they are and what they want to be. Beginning with the end in mind is about planning ahead. This can be using your agenda to write down when assignments are due so you can plan your time. While being spontaneous can be good at times, we also need to plan things in order to help us achieve our goals. Spend time doing things that are helping you achieve your goals.

3 Put First Things First (execute on the most important priorities) 3

To live a more balanced existence, you have to recognize that not doing everything that comes along is okay. There's no need to overextend yourself. All it takes is realizing that it's all right to say no when necessary and then focus on your highest priorities. Habit 1 says, "You're in charge. You're the creator." Being proactive is about choice. Habit 2 is the first, or mental, creation. Beginning with the End in Mind is about vision. Habit 3 is the second creation, the physical creation. This habit is where Habits 1 and 2 come together. It happens day in and day out, moment-by-moment. It is about managing your time. But that's not all it's about. Habit 3 is about life management as well--your purpose, values, roles, and priorities. What are "first things?" First things are those

things you, personally, find of most worth. If you put first things first, you are organizing and managing time and events according to the personal priorities you established in Habit 2.

For our Pioneers, it is prioritizing their day, the week, their school year. It is acting on the things you write in your agenda. It is completing their homework or project before spending time playing video games or watching TV. It is about our athletes putting in the extra time on the field, on the court, in the gym/weight room to help them be their best if making it to regionals or state is their goal. It is our singers and thespians practicing their lines and music.

4 Think Win Win (Work effectively and efficiently with others to achieve optimal results) 4

Think Win-Win isn't about being nice, nor is it a quick-fix technique. It is a character-based code for human interaction. Most of us learn to base our self-worth on comparisons and competition. We think about succeeding in terms of someone else failing--that is, if I win, you lose; or if you win, I lose. Life becomes a zero-sum game. You think there is only so much pie to go around, and if you get a big piece, there is less for me; it's not fair, and I'm going to make sure you don't get anymore. Win-win sees life as a cooperative arena, not a competitive one. Win-win is a frame of mind and heart that constantly seeks mutual benefit in all human interactions. Win-win means agreements or solutions are mutually beneficial and satisfying. We both get to eat the pie. Many people think in terms of either/or: either you're nice or you're tough. Win-win requires that you be both. It is a balancing act between courage and consideration. To go for win-win, you not only have to be empathic, but you also have to be confident. You not only have to be considerate and sensitive, you also have to be brave. To do that--to achieve that balance between courage and consideration--is the essence of real maturity and is fundamental to win-win.

At Patriot, we want our students looking for ways to help others. This includes being good teammates on the field/court and working together during group work in class. Several clubs provide peer tutoring which help struggling students learn as well as reinforce concepts for the tutors. It means not being a bully or making fun of students who may seem different from them. We have clubs that help celebrate our differences and work together to be a positive force for all.

5 Seek First To Understand, Then To Be Understood (Communicate effectively at all levels) 5

Communication is the most important skill in life. You spend years learning how to read and write, and years learning how to speak. But what about listening? What training have you had that enables you to listen so you really, deeply understand another human being? If you're like most people, you probably seek first to be understood; you want to get your point across. And in doing so, you may ignore the other person completely, pretend that you're listening, selectively hear only certain parts of the conversation or attentively focus on only the words being said, but miss the meaning entirely. So why does this happen? Because most people listen with the intent to reply, not to understand. You listen to yourself as you prepare in your mind what you are going to say, the questions you are going to ask, etc. You filter everything you hear through your life experiences, your frame of reference. You check what you hear against your autobiography and see how it measures up. And consequently, you decide prematurely what the other person means before he/she finishes communicating.

At Patriot, we want our students to be understanding. This of course includes listening to their teachers with respect and trying to learn the material and get the most out of class. But it is more than that. It is being a good friend to their classmates. It includes not responding negatively to things you see on social media. We have a diverse student body—our students should take the time to listen to others' views, even if we do not agree. This helps support diversity and tolerance and creates a more positive learning environment.

6 Synergize (Innovate and problem solve with those who have a different point of view) 6

To put it simply, synergy means "two heads are better than one." Synergize is the habit of creative cooperation. It is teamwork, open-mindedness, and the adventure of finding new solutions to old problems. But it doesn't just happen on its own. It's a process, and through that process, people bring all their personal experience and expertise to the table. Together, they can produce far better results than they could individually. Synergy lets us discover jointly things we are much less likely to discover by ourselves. It is the idea that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. When people begin to interact together genuinely, and they're open to each other's influence, they begin to gain new insight. The capability of inventing new approaches is increased exponentially because of differences. Valuing differences is what really drives synergy. Do you truly value the mental, emotional, and psychological differences among people? Differences should be seen as strengths, not weaknesses. They add zest to life.

For Patriot, this can benefit our sports teams, where we use the strengths of each athlete to create the best team possible. It can be leading school-wide improvement projects or getting the entire student body involved in a charity. If you are assigned a group project, you can look at who is best at research, who is the creative one, who loves to write, in order to share the workload and develop the best result.

7 Sharpen the Saw (seek continuous improvement and renewal professionally and personally) 7

Sharpen the Saw means preserving and enhancing the greatest asset you have--you. It means having a balanced program for self-renewal in the four areas of your life: physical, social/emotional, mental, and spiritual. As you renew yourself in each of the four areas, you create growth and change in your life. Sharpen the Saw keeps you fresh so you can continue to practice the other six habits. You increase your capacity to produce and handle the challenges around you. Without this renewal, the body becomes weak, the mind mechanical, the emotions raw, the spirit insensitive, and the person selfish. Feeling good doesn't just happen. Living a life in balance means taking the necessary time to renew yourself. It's all up to you. You can renew yourself through relaxation. Or you can totally burn yourself out by overdoing everything. You can pamper yourself mentally and spiritually. Or you can go through life oblivious to your well-being. You can experience vibrant energy. Or you can procrastinate and miss out on the benefits of good health and exercise. You can revitalize yourself and face a new day in peace and harmony. Or you can wake up in the morning full of apathy because your get-up-and-go has got-up-and-gone. Just remember that every day provides a new opportunity for renewal--a new opportunity to recharge yourself instead of hitting the wall. All it takes is the desire, knowledge, and skill.

For our Patriot students, we want them to grow in all four areas: physical, social/emotional, mental, and spiritual (whatever that may mean for them). Physically, it can mean having a good breakfast before school (and we offer a Second Chance Breakfast as well), exercising, and getting plenty of rest (don't stay up all night studying or playing games/watching TV). On the social/emotional side, it can include making great friendships with classmates (and having a good relationship with parents, teachers, coaches, etc.), saying hello to someone you don't know, doing something nice to a stranger. On the mental side, it can include learning a new hobby, pleasure reading (outside all the school assignments), writing in a journal, etc. And from a spiritual perspective, it can mean spending time in nature, meditation, listening to music, art, prayer, community service. Having the right balance in your life creates a better life and a better you.