BigFuture®

Is My Teen Ready for College?

Time Management, Organization, and Confidence for College

4/16/2026

Why Teens Struggle

Teens don’t struggle with time management and organization for a lack of caring

Inconsistent Habits

Constant Distractions

Juggling A Lot

As teens transition from high school to college, they need to develop these skills.

What We'll Cover Today

What you'll leave with today:

- Organization and Time Management Tips
- Organizing Information and Thoughts

Bottom Line: You'll get strategies and tips that you can start this week.

Organizing and Time Management

Six Practical Tips

Tip 1: The Weekly Reset

- 10-15 minutes once a week
- Review upcoming assignments and activities
- Plan the week ahead
- Identify busy days

This tip in action:

- Sit down every Sunday for 10-15 mins
- Ask:
  - What do you have coming up this week?
  - What's your busiest day this week?
  - What might sneak up on you?
- Help them map bigger assignments

Tip 2: Use One System

- One calendar or planner (google calendar, iCal, physical planner)
- Track these:
  - Assignments
  - Tests
  - Activities and commitments
  - Social plans
  - Job
- If it’s not written down, it doesn’t exist
- The goal is simplicity and consistency

This tip in action:

- Do a system reset after you choose the tool → move everything to one place

Tip 3: Plan Time in Chunks

- Don’t leave time unplanned
- Time blocking makes time visible and realistic
- Example:
  - 4:00 – 6:00 PM → Homework
  - 6:00 – 6:30 PM → Break
  - 6:30 – 7:30 PM → Practice violin

This tip in action:

- After school ask your teen to map out their afternoon/evening
- Encourage specific time slots (not vague plans)
  - Instead of “I’ll do homework later” → I’m going to do algebra from 4-5pm

Tip 4: Reduce Distractions

- Phone in the other room
- Use focus mode on app timers
- Try 25-minute works sessions or the Pomodoro method:
  - Write your to do list
  - Work on a task for 25 minutes
  - Take 5-minute break
  - After four cycles, take a longer, 15-30 minute break

This tip in action:

- Co-create a focused environment:
  - Phone in another room or use the focus mode
- Let your teen choose what works
  - Ask: What helps you focus best? Music? Quiet?

Tip 5: Build a Helpful Mindset

- Progress over perfection
- Small wins matter
- Consistency builds confidence

This tip in action:

- Notice and reinforce the small wins (starting earlier, writing things down, etc.)
- Help them reflect, when things don’t go to plan:
  - Ask: Try “what got in the way?” instead of “Why didn’t you do this?”

Tip 6: Organize Digital Life

- Folders by class
- Clear file names and naming conventions save time, reduce stress, and make studying easier
- 5-minute weekly inbox and folder cleanup
- Don’t be afraid to start anew

This tip in action:

- Include this as a step in your weekly reset
- Agree on simple naming rules – Examples:
  - Class_Assignment_Version *(English_Essay_Draft1)*
  - Class_Topic_YYY-MM-DD *(English_PersonalEssay_2026-04-16)*

Organizing Information and Thinking

Focused Note-Taking

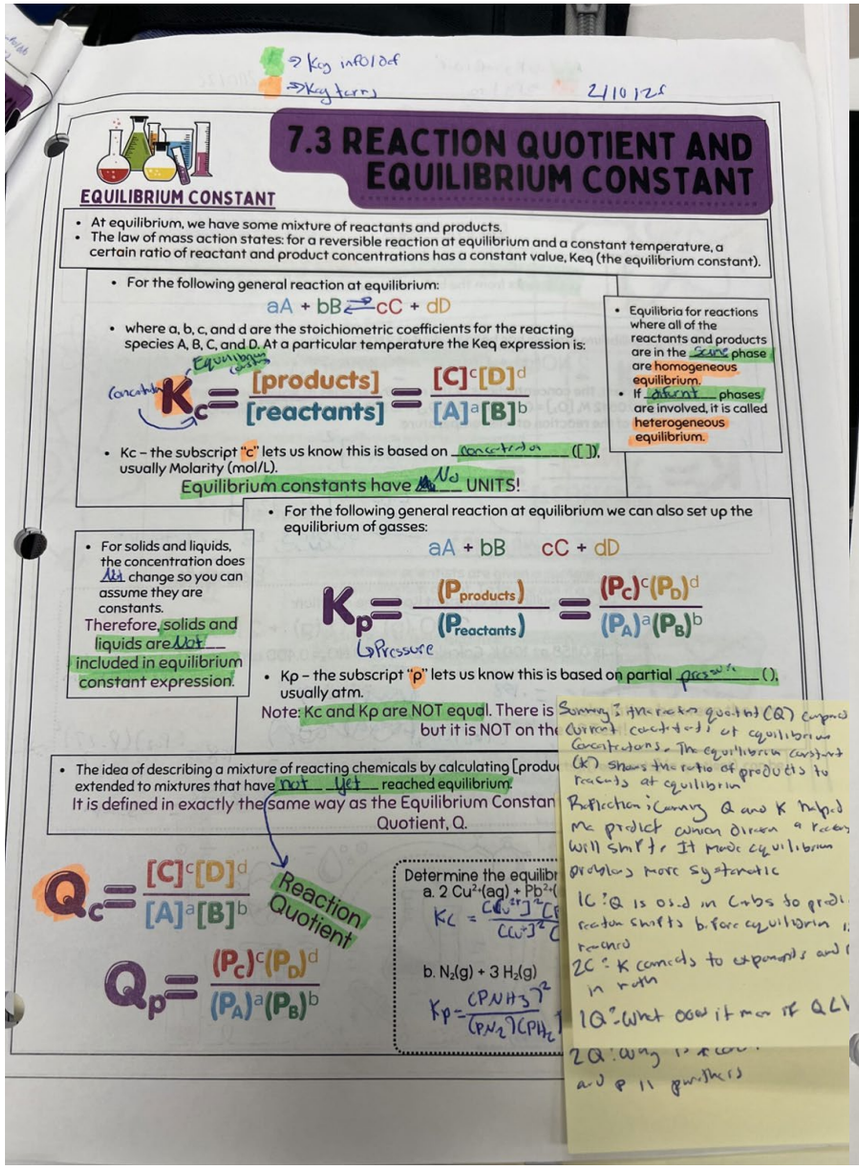
Focused Note-Taking

- What do I wish someone had taught me about note-taking when I was in school?

- Why is note-taking an important skill for my students to learn and practice?

Source: AVID College and Career Readiness

Focused Note-Taking Examples



7.3 REACTION QUOTIENT AND EQUILIBRIUM CONSTANT

EQUILIBRIUM CONSTANT

- At equilibrium, we have some mixture of reactants and products.
- The law of mass action states: for a reversible reaction at equilibrium and a constant temperature, a certain ratio of reactant and product concentrations has a constant value, Keq (the equilibrium constant).

- For the following general reaction at equilibrium:

$aA + bB \rightleftharpoons cC + dD$

- where a, b, c, and d are the stoichiometric coefficients for the reacting species A, B, C, and D. At a particular temperature the Keq expression is:

$$K_c = \frac{[products]}{[reactants]} = \frac{[C]^c[D]^d}{[A]^a[B]^b}$$

- Kc – the subscript "c" lets us know this is based on concentration ([ ]), usually Molarity (mol/L).

Equilibrium constants have No UNITS!

- Equilibria for reactions where all of the reactants and products are in the same phase are homogeneous equilibrium.
- If different phases are involved, it is called heterogeneous equilibrium.

- For solids and liquids, the concentration does not change so you can assume they are constants. Therefore, solids and liquids are Not included in equilibrium constant expression.

- For the following general reaction at equilibrium we can also set up the equilibrium of gasses:

$aA + bB \quad cC + dD$

$$K_p = \frac{(P_{products})}{(P_{reactants})} = \frac{(P_C)^c(P_D)^d}{(P_A)^a(P_B)^b}$$

- Kp – the subscript "p" lets us know this is based on partial pressure ( ), usually atm.

Note: Kc and Kp are NOT equal. There is [illegible] but it is NOT on th[illegible]

- The idea of describing a mixture of reacting chemicals by calculating [produ[illegible] extended to mixtures that have not yet reached equilibrium. It is defined in exactly the same way as the Equilibrium Constan[illegible] Quotient, Q.

$$Q_c = \frac{[C]^c[D]^d}{[A]^a[B]^b}$$ Reaction Quotient

$$Q_p = \frac{(P_C)^c(P_D)^d}{(P_A)^a(P_B)^b}$$

Determine the equilibr[illegible]
a. $2\,Cu^{2+}(aq) + Pb^{2+}($[illegible]
$K_c = \frac{[Cu^{2+}]^2[C}{[Cu^{2+}]^2[C}$

b. $N_2(g) + 3\,H_2(g)$
$K_p = \frac{(PNH_3)^2}{(PN_2)(PH_2)^3}$

Summary: the reaction quotient (Q) compares current concentrations at equilibrium concentrations. The equilibrium constant (K) shows the ratio of products to reacts at equilibrium

Reflection: Comparing Q and K helped me predict which direction a reaction will shift. It made equilibrium problems more systematic

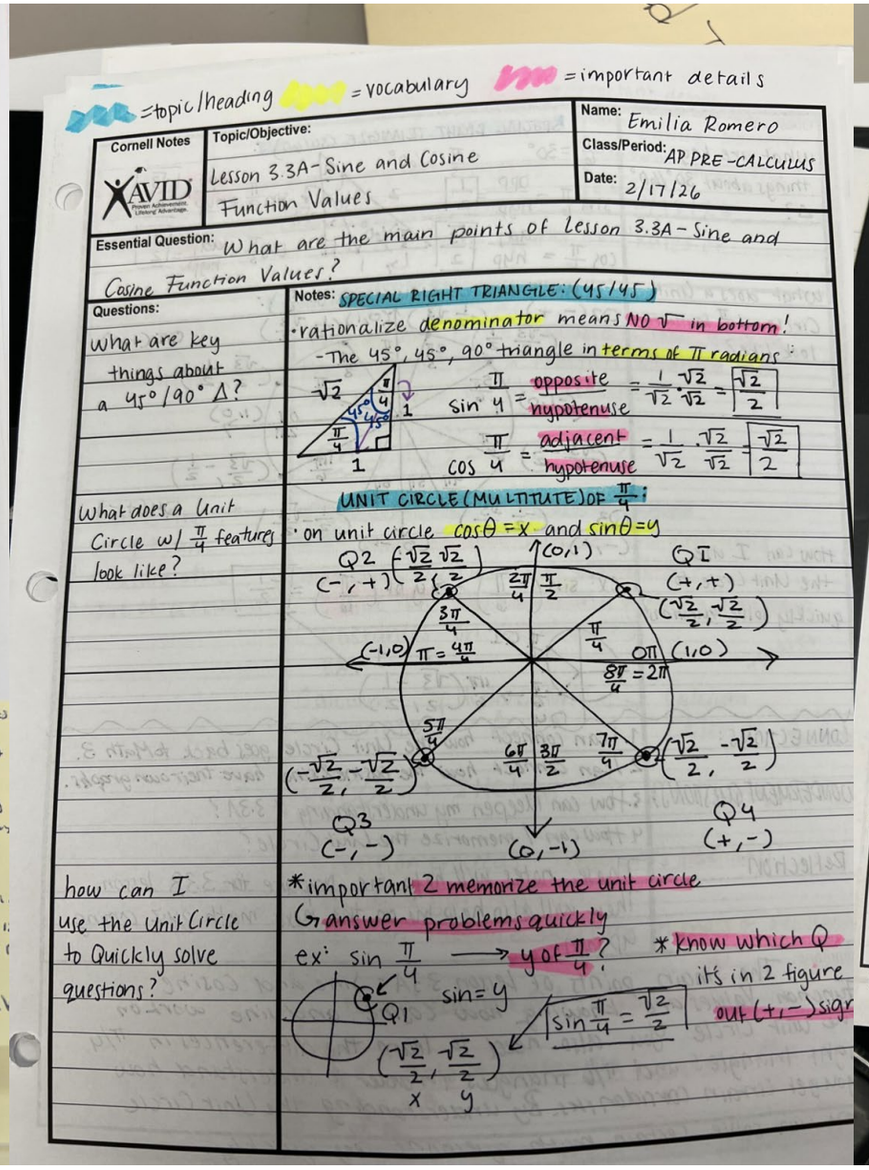
1C: Q is used in Cobs to predict reaction shifts before equilibrium is reached

2C: K connects to exponents and [illegible] in rxn

1Q: What does it mean if Q [illegible]

2Q: Why is [illegible]

a: u p ll questions



=topic/heading =vocabulary =important details

Cornell Notes | Topic/Objective: Lesson 3.3A- Sine and Cosine Function Values | Name: Emilia Romero | Class/Period: AP PRE-CALCULUS | Date: 2/17/26

Essential Question: What are the main points of lesson 3.3A - Sine and Cosine Function Values?

Questions:

What are key things about a 45°/90° Δ?

What does a Unit Circle w/ π/4 features look like?

How can I use the Unit Circle to Quickly solve questions?

Notes: SPECIAL RIGHT TRIANGLE: (45/45)

- rationalize denominator means NO √ in bottom!
- The 45°, 45°, 90° triangle in terms of π radians:

$\sin\frac{\pi}{4} = \frac{\text{opposite}}{\text{hypotenuse}} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}\cdot\frac{\sqrt{2}}{\sqrt{2}} = \frac{\sqrt{2}}{2}$

$\cos\frac{\pi}{4} = \frac{\text{adjacent}}{\text{hypotenuse}} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}\cdot\frac{\sqrt{2}}{\sqrt{2}} = \frac{\sqrt{2}}{2}$

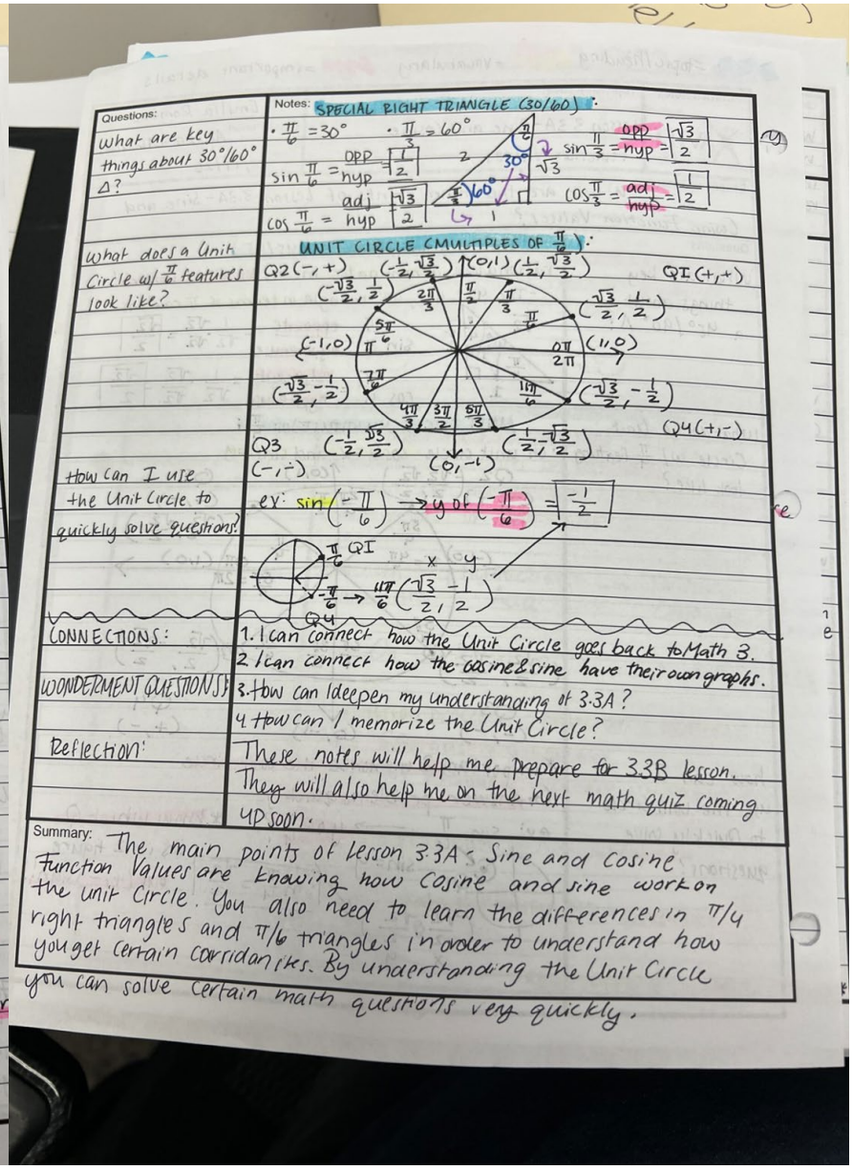
UNIT CIRCLE (MULTIPLE) OF π/4:

- on unit circle $\cos\theta = x$ and $\sin\theta = y$

*important 2 memorize the unit circle
↳ answer problems quickly

ex: $\sin\frac{\pi}{4}$ → y of $\frac{\pi}{4}$? *know which Q it's in 2 figure out (+,−) sign

$\sin\frac{\pi}{4} = \frac{\sqrt{2}}{2}$



Questions:

What are key things about 30°/60° Δ?

What does a Unit Circle w/ π/6 features look like?

How can I use the Unit Circle to quickly solve questions?

CONNECTIONS:

WONDERMENT QUESTIONS:

Reflection:

Notes: SPECIAL RIGHT TRIANGLE (30/60):

$\sin\frac{\pi}{6} = \frac{opp}{hyp} = \frac{1}{2}$ $\cos\frac{\pi}{6} = \frac{adj}{hyp} = \frac{\sqrt{3}}{2}$ $\sin\frac{\pi}{3} = \frac{opp}{hyp} = \frac{\sqrt{3}}{2}$ $\cos\frac{\pi}{3} = \frac{adj}{hyp} = \frac{1}{2}$

UNIT CIRCLE (MULTIPLES OF π/6):

ex: $\sin\left(\frac{-\pi}{6}\right)$ → y of $\left(\frac{-\pi}{6}\right) = \frac{-1}{2}$

1. I can connect how the Unit Circle goes back to Math 3.
2. I can connect how the cosine & sine have their own graphs.
3. How can I deepen my understanding of 3.3A?
4. How can I memorize the Unit Circle?

These notes will help me prepare for 3.3B lesson. They will also help me on the next math quiz coming up soon.

Summary: The main points of lesson 3.3A - Sine and Cosine Function Values are knowing how cosine and sine work on the unit circle. You also need to learn the differences in π/4 right triangles and π/6 triangles in order to understand how you get certain corridinates. By understanding the Unit Circle you can solve certain math questions very quickly.

Focused Note-Taking Checklist

Steps	Indicators
Note-Taking	❑ Name, Date, Period in PEN ❑ Essential Question and/or Topic ❑ Notes are written in a chosen format (Cornell, Worksheet, 3 Column Notes, Graphic Organizer, etc.) ❑ Notes are organized

Processing Notes (Marking Period 1 Focus = 4 pts)	❑ Shows Revision (Done in a different color pen)
	  ❑ Circle of key terms
	  ❑ Highlight main ideas
	  ❑ Chunked Information
	  ❑ "Aha" Moments

Thinking and Connecting
 	
Questions
Confusions
Connections
Wonders
	❑ Can find Questions and Connections easily
	  ❑ Use Q and C or symbols
	❑ 2 Higher-level questions
	❑ 2 Connections to experience, knowledge or past content/classes
	  ❑ This made me think of…
	  ❑ I remember…
	  ❑ This relates to…
	❑ Added information in different colors (revisions and shows understanding)

Summary/Reflection	❑ Answers the Essential Question
	❑ 4 Sentences minimum
	  ❑ 2 sentence summary
	  ❑ I learned….
	  ❑ 2 sentence reflection
	  ❑ I still need to know…
	  ❑ I don't understand…I can find out by…
	  ❑ I will use this information to…
	  ❑ I can apply this to…

How Can Parents Support Organized Notes

- ❏ **(Purpose)** - Ask how they use their notes/handouts after creating them in classes.
- ❏ **(Importance)** - Have them review their notes before and after an assessment to see the value of taking and reviewing notes.
- ❏ **(Practice)** - Have students take out their notes/handouts after school and follow steps 2-4 of the FNT process.
- ❏ **(Apply)** - Help them come up with a note taking system that works for them and help them be successful in their classes.

Visit the BigFuture Parent Community for More Resources:

Key takeaways

Build strong systems

Simple systems help teens stay organized, manage stress, and build independence.

Organize responsibilities, tasks, and thoughts

Organization includes both managing responsibilities and organizing thinking.

Progress comes from small and consistent habits

Weekly check-ins, time blocking, fewer distractions, and regular note review do not need to be perfect. Small, repeatable habits build confidence and prepare teens for college and life.

Next week: Learn how to better understand and coach your teen.

April 23 @ 8 PM ET / 7 PM CT / 5 PM PT

Jenny Anderson
Award-winning Journalist, Speaker, and Author

Rebecca Winthrop
Director of the Center for Universal Education at Brookings

BigFuture

Is your teen coasting or stressed out?

Join us on April 23 as Rebecca Winthrop and Jenny Anderson, co-authors of The Disengaged Teen, share practical ways to nurture your teen's motivation, confidence, and curiosity for high school and life.