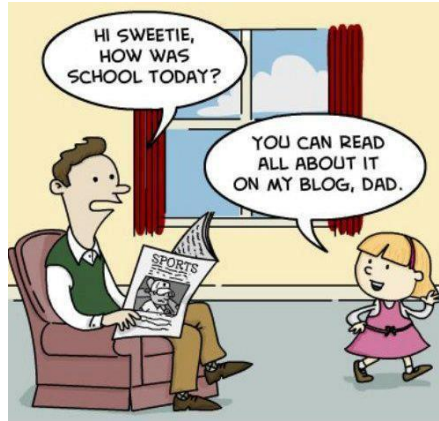


## Some Articles to Help Parent Teen Communications



### 25 Ways to Ask Your Teens “How Was School Today?” WITHOUT asking them “How Was School Today?”

<http://www.simplesimonandco.com/2014/08/25-ways-ask-teens-school-today-without-asking-school-today.html>

August 29, 2014

25 Ways  
To Ask Your Teen:  
"How Was School  
Today?"  
WITHOUT asking  
"How Was School  
Today?"

Simple Simon and Company

On Wednesday I posted [25 ways to ask your kids “How was school today?” without asking them “How was school today?”](#) and the questions came from a list that I made to ask my own children who are in elementary school.

But all of those questions are geared toward elementary school aged kids...and I started to think...if I think it's hard for me to get school stories from my 10 year old boy *now* what is it going to be like *5 years from now*!?

And then I remembered that I know what its going to be like. I taught either junior high or high school for almost a decade and I get that communication with that age group is an art. BUT when you get dialogue, *engaged dialogue* with a teen it's never disappointing, it's guaranteed to be interesting,

sometimes it can be very enlightening, and it's ALWAYS worth the work. ALWAYS.

So tonight my husband (who also teaches high school) and I sat down and made a list of 25 ways to ask your teens “How Was School Today?” without asking them “How Was School Today?”...in an effort to get some sort of engaged, interesting dialog...even if it only lasts in that brief time in between them texting friends...

- #1. Where in the school do you hang out the most? (Like a particular hall, classroom, parking lot, etc.) Where in the school do you never hang out?
- #2. What would your school be better with? What would your school be better without?
- #3. If you were a teacher what class would you teach? What class would be the worst to teach? Why?
- #4. What was the coolest (saddest, funniest, scariest) thing that you saw today.
- #5. Tell me one thing that you learned today.
- #6. If your day at school today was a movie what movie would it be?
- #7. Besides walking to their next classes, what else do people do in the halls in between classes?
- #8. Who do you think you could be nicer to?
- #9. What is your easiest class? What is your hardest class? OR What class are your learning the most in? What class are you learning the least in?

- #10. If they played music in the halls at school what would everyone want them to play over the loudspeaker?
- #11. If you could read minds what teachers mind would you read? What classmates mind would you read? Whose mind would you NOT want to read?
- #12. If today had a theme song what would it be?
- #13. Which class has your favorite group of students in it? Which class has the worst group of students?
- #14. What do you think you should do more of at school? What do you think you should do less of?
- #15. What are the top 3 (or 5) things that you hear people say in the halls?
- #16. What do you think the most important part of school is?
- #17. Tell me one question that you had today...even if it wasn't answered....actually, especially if it wasn't answered...
- #18. What class has the most cute boys/girls in it?
- #19. If an alien space ship landed at your school who would you like them to beam aboard and take back to their home planet?
- #20. Who did you help today? Who helped you today?
- #21. If you could be invisible for the day at school what would you do?
- #22. What part of the day do you look forward to? What part of the day do you dread?
- #23. What would you change about school lunch?
- #24. What classmate is most likely to be arrested, made president, become a millionaire, be in movies, let loose a flock of wild chickens in the library, etc.
- #25. If you had to go to only one class every day which class would it be?
- #26. Tell me one thing you read at school today.
- #27. If your day at school was an emoticon which one would it be?
- #28. What do you think your teachers talked about in the faculty room today after school?

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Ok, so I know there were a few more than 25...but with teenagers...we all need all the help we can get! 😊

Good luck with those teens and happy conversing!

-liZ

\*NOTE:

I don't have teenagers of my own but I've worked with my fair share of them....and one thing that I've found is that when you want them to open up just sitting them down and asking questions isn't really effective. BUT, if you....say....trap them in the car...and talk to them while you are driving...and they don't have to make eye contact... they are more willing to offer up more information or ask more questions.

This also happens while you are working with them on things like making dinner, folding laundry, rearranging furniture, etc. You can casually talk and ask questions without making them feel like you are grilling them.

When I taught school sometimes I would make up work project jobs to do with students that I was worried about just so that we could have some heart to hearts while scrubbing desks or cleaning out closets. It sounds lame, but I'm telling you, it works.

**Parents: How to Communicate with Your Teenager After School (Hint: Don't Ask About Homework)** - See more at: <http://yourteenmag.com/2014/02/connect-with-teens/>

Does this after-school conversation sound familiar?

Hi Honey . . .  
Hi Mom (or Dad) . . .  
Do you have homework?

If so, it may be time to for a different approach. “Many teenagers are upset by the fact that when they come home from school, the first thing their parents do is ask about [homework](#) or cleaning their room or doing the dishes and so on. They then feel that this is all the relationship is about,” explains Cleveland-area psychologist Dr. Trysa Shulman.

Rather, says Shulman, take the time to [connect with your teenager](#) before getting down to after-school business. “That first time you interact with your teenager is a really sensitive time and can be used just to connect,” she explains. “How are you doing? How was your day? Tell them about your day. Just check in and be present with each other. Have a snack. Let them unwind. And connect for however long it takes to actually connect.”

Then, and only then, go ahead and talk about homework or tonight’s piano lesson or next week’s exam or whatever else, says Shulman, noting that those conversations will be easier if you’ve allowed for this process. “Of course, there are things that have to be discussed. Of course there are things that have to be checked in about, but in the context of a [strong relationship](#) those things become less stressful.”

Notes Shulman: “In general, a good rule of thumb is, if the majority of interactions with the teenager are about a parent asking them to do something or correcting them for a mistake they made or criticizing them, the parent needs to step back and figure out how to change that balance so there are plenty of interactions that are just about [connecting](#).”

And if you’re stressed by a schedule that doesn’t allow for this all-important activity with your teenagers, then perhaps it’s time to reassess. “If you have trouble keeping up with all the things they’re doing or if they don’t have time to just relax, then they may be over-scheduled,” says Shulman. “It’s okay to let up on some of those things. The health of your relationship is more valuable than whatever you may have to give up.”

- See more at: <http://yourteenmag.com/2014/02/connect-with-teens/#sthash.v1KWXQNa.dpuf>

