

How to Cope With Repeating a Grade

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If you've been told that you have to repeat a grade in school, you're probably not very happy about it. Whether you're being held back because you missed a lot of school, because you're struggling with the materials, or for any other reason, it's important to have a good attitude about it if you want to succeed. Get yourself back on the right track by committing yourself to doing your best this time around.

Part
1

Part 1 of 3: Dealing With the Social Implications



1 Don't be too hard on yourself. You may be crushed when you hear that you have to repeat a grade, but it's not the end of the world! Try your best not to feel bad about yourself because of it. If you have a good attitude about it and use it as motivation to do better in school, being held back may actually do you a lot of good.

- Being held back does not mean that you are stupid or a bad student. It simply means that you need some more time to reach the benchmarks of that specific grade.[1]
- Remember that your parents and teachers decided to hold you back because they want what's best for you, not because they want to punish you.
- If you become withdrawn in school because you feel bad about repeating a grade, you're likely to do worse.[2] This is why it's so important to stay positive and motivated.



2 Decide how you will tell people. Eventually you will have to tell your friends that you are being held back. Think about whether you want to tell them in person or by phone or social media. The right decision for you will depend on the relationship you have with your friends.^[3]

- Your classmates may pick on you for having to repeat a grade, but try not to let it bother you. Decide what you will say to negative people ahead of time so it will be easier to keep your composure. Think about saying something like, "I just need some extra time to work on math. It's really no big deal."
- It may help to approach the subject casually. The less upset you are about it, the less likely people are to give you a hard time about it.



3 Keep in touch with old friends. Just because you're not in class with your old friends anymore does not mean you have to lose touch with them. Make an effort to spend time with close friends outside of school.^[4]

- If you believe your old friends caused you to be held back a grade, it's best to distance yourself from them and spend more time with friends who encourage you to do well in school.



4 Make new friends. ^[5] Making friends with your new classmates is very important to your overall well-being. It might be tough at first to make new friends, but keep at it! You're more likely to be successful in school and enjoy being there.^[6]

- If you were held back because you were immature for your age, you might actually find that you have more in common with your new classmates.
- Try joining sports or clubs to spend more time with your classmates outside of the classroom.

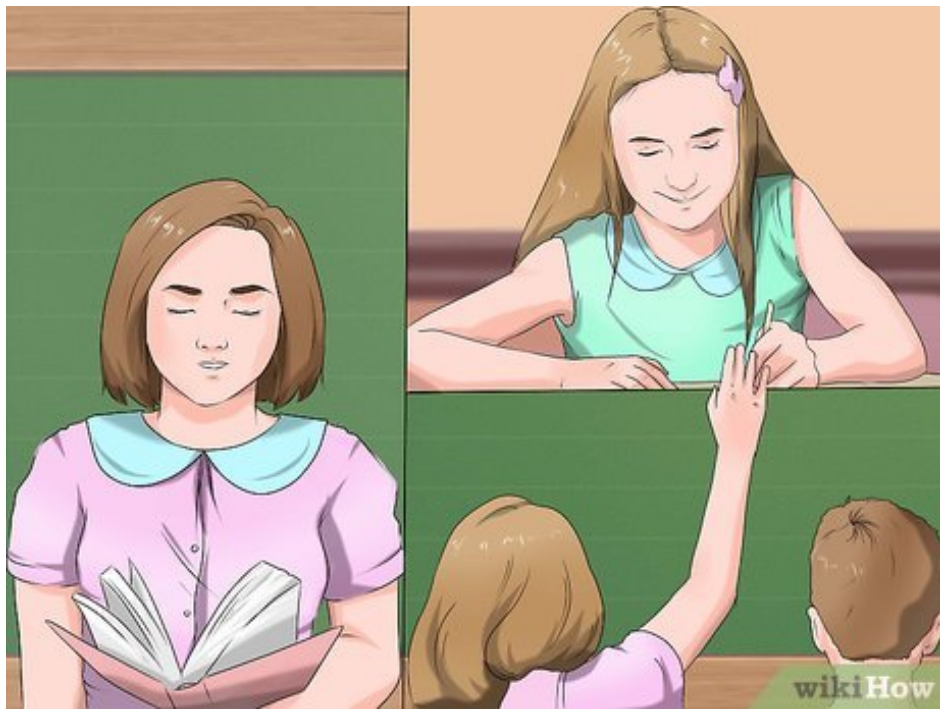


1 Determine why you are repeating the grade. The first step to doing better the second time around is to understand the factors that caused you to be held back in the first place.^[7] If you simply did not understand the material, you may just need some more time. If, however, you skipped class, didn't pay attention, or didn't do any of your homework, you will need to make some changes in order to do well this time.



2 Get involved in your educational plan. Your parents and teachers may have an idea about what you need to succeed, but it's important for you to be involved in this conversation as well. Work with your parents and teachers to decide how you will prevent a repeat of the mistakes that caused you to be held back. Your input might encourage your school to make changes to your IEP that will really benefit you.^[8]

- If you feel you would benefit from some accommodations at school, like more time with tests or a little more personal attention, be sure to speak up.
- Don't blame your teacher, but let your parents know if her teaching style didn't work for you. You shouldn't have to deal with the same approach a second time if you would benefit from something different.^[9]



3 Apply Yourself. ^[10] If you want to **do well in school**, you need to work hard at it! Be sure to listen to your teacher and understand what is expected of you.

- Always show up for class and pay attention.
- **Take notes** in class.
- **Do your homework** on time. It helps to have a designated space for homework and a regular routine for doing it.
- Develop good **study habits**.
- If you don't understand something you read, read it again.



4 Work on your behavior. If the reason you got held back has more to do with behavioral issues than it does with your academic abilities, it's important to work really hard on behaving better at school. Have a discussion with your parents and teachers about the problems you are having and the expectations they have of you.^[11]

- If you can't control your behavior on your own, let your parents and your teachers know how you are feeling. They may be able to offer additional support. You may also benefit from talking to your school counselor.^[12]

Part
3

Part 3 of 3: Getting Extra Help



1 Don't wait to speak up. If you find yourself struggling in this grade again, be sure to get help before it's too late. The sooner you do something about it, the easier it will be for you to get caught up and improve your grade.^[13]



2 Ask your teacher for help. If you don't understand something in class, the first thing you should do is talk to your teacher about it. If you can, ask questions during class so they will be answered right away.^[14]

- If you feel uncomfortable asking questions during class or if there isn't time to do so, talk to your teacher after class. Make sure she knows that you are trying hard to do your best but you do not understand the material.



3 Consider getting a tutor. If your teacher can't provide you with as much extra help as you need, you might really benefit from one-on-one tutoring. Many schools offer tutoring programs after school, so be sure to talk to your teacher or counselor about what is available for you.^[15]

- If your school does not have a tutoring program, your teacher may suggest that you work with another student in the class.
- Private tutoring is another option, although it can be expensive. Depending on your tutoring needs and your family's budget, you may be able to go to a tutoring center after school or you may be able to have a private tutor come to your house to help you with your work.



Community Q&A

Question

How can I face my fellow classmates for the first time when they are younger than me?



Community Answer

If you are older than them, set an example to show them that you are mature and well behaved. They may recognize it and start being your friend. Trust me I have repeated a grade as well and I'm doing great.

Helpful 85 Not Helpful 3

Question

What impact will this have on my jobs in the future?



Community Answer

As long as you obtain your HS diploma, your employer will not know you repeated a grade.

Helpful 83 Not Helpful 8

Question

What would happen if a friend failed, but is still planning to go up a grade?



Community Answer

You need to bring your friend to reality, but don't be brutal about it. Most of the time, it's fear that makes us disregard the situation that we are in. Just make sure your friend knows what's going on and is fully aware that despite what they may think, they are not going to move up a grade if they failed.

Helpful 28 Not Helpful 0

Question

How do I pay more attention in class?



Community Answer

Obtain self-discipline. This is a life skill more important than any other. Make sure to isolate yourself from your friends during class-time if you strongly believe that they're holding you back. Make eye contact with the teacher and take notes. Make sure you get plenty of sleep at night so you're not tired in class and never procrastinate.

Helpful 40 Not Helpful 2

Question

I am worried that people will laugh at me for repeating a grade.



Community Answer

Do you really care about what people think of you? You were given a chance to get better, to educate yourself. It may be difficult for you to understand this now, but once you are older and out of school, you will realize how small the problem was. Having some people laugh at or pick on you is something that almost every kid has experienced at one time or another in high school. It will be forgotten once you get older and, hopefully, wiser.

Helpful 93 Not Helpful 17

Question

How am I suppose to tell my parents I'm repeating a grade? They'll be devastated.



Community Answer

It isn't easy but you can help them by showing that you are up to the task of major improvement the next time around. Their devastation is likely to be a mixture of worrying about your future, wondering how to better help you and being concerned about what others will think when they have to explain how their child is doing. Tell them openly, be honest about why you failed the grade, and be ready with your plan for pulling yourself out of this mess and doing really well from now on, such as asking for a tutor, getting together with your parents and the teacher to establish a set of goals and also finding out whether it's possible to switch up to the higher grade at some time during the next year should you prove yourself ready and capable again.

Helpful 49 Not Helpful 8

Question

What happens if I repeat the grade multiple times?



Community Answer

Nothing really happens - you just prolong your education and prevent yourself from moving on in life. Work hard and make sure you pass this time. Reach out for help if you need it.

Helpful 46 Not Helpful 11

Question

How do I tell my relatives?



Community Answer

You don't need to tell most of your relatives. If they are close relatives and they ask about it, just tell them the truth. If they aren't close relatives, they probably won't remember which grade you just completed, and won't even realize you are repeating a grade.

Helpful 33 Not Helpful 6

Question

How do I make friends with classmates who are younger than me after I've been held back?



Community Answer

Be friendly and talk to the kids in your class. If someone mentions that you've been held back, acknowledge it and quickly move on without getting offended or making a big deal out of it. If you don't draw attention to it and are kind and fun to be around, chances are most kids won't care about the age difference.

Helpful 39 Not Helpful 7

Question

How do I cope with younger kids in the grade making fun of me when I'm in their grade?



Community Answer

Ignore them to the best of your ability. Chances are, there is someone about to fail in that class that will be repeating as well. As long as you pass this time, nothing they say matters. It's not like they define who you are.

Helpful 35 Not Helpful 9

[See more answers](#)



Tips

- As unpleasant as being held back may seem, try to look at it as an opportunity to go back and fix the mistakes you have made in the past.
- Keep in mind that each grade builds on the previous grade. If you haven't yet mastered the material in fourth grade, you won't be ready for fifth grade. Repeating a grade may prevent you from continuing to struggle with new material every year.
- Forget about what other people might say or think.

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About This Article



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This article was co-authored by **Chloe Carmichael, PhD**. Chloe Carmichael, PhD is a Licensed Clinical Psychologist who runs a private practice in New York City. With over a decade of psychological consulting experience, Dr. Chloe specializes in relationship issues, stress management, self esteem, and career coaching. She has also instructed undergraduate courses at Long Island University and has served as adjunct faculty at the City University of New York. Dr. Chloe completed her PhD in Clinical Psychology at Long Island University in Brooklyn, New York and her clinical training at Lenox Hill Hospital and Kings County Hospital. She is accredited by the American Psychological Association and is the author of "Nervous Energy: Harness the Power of Your Anxiety" and "Dr. Chloe's 10 Commandments of Dating." This article has been viewed 123,890 times.

★★★★☆
35 votes - 71%

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