

## TEENS

*Speak Out***Are Teens Overscheduled?**

**T**he high school years can bring many different kinds of stress. Teens today are busier than ever as they try to balance school, athletics and other extracurricular activities, part-time jobs, friendships, dating relationships, and family responsibilities. All these demands can cause a great deal of stress, possibly leading to health problems. Do teens have too many responsibilities? Are they overscheduled? Should parents help teens include free time in their schedule to pursue interests such as reading, art, or just relaxing? Read on to find out two teens' viewpoints about this issue.



## Benefits of a Full Schedule

Having a full schedule of different activities can help teens develop new interests and skills because they're always trying new things. Many of these skills, such as multitasking, may help them succeed in college and in the work world. Meeting the challenges of a full schedule can also give teens a sense of accomplishment and build self-esteem.

“I have a busy schedule, and I like it that way. It keeps me challenged, and I don't feel bored. Juggling school, baseball, a job, and time with family and friends also helps prepare me for the real world. It can get stressful sometimes, but that's part of life.”

—Jeff Z., age 17



## Benefits of a Relaxed Schedule

Having a more relaxed schedule allows teens to devote attention to a few important activities that they really enjoy instead of stretching themselves too thin. A relaxed schedule can help them manage their stress level and avoid stress-related health problems. Also, by not overloading their schedules, teens can better explore their creative interests.

“Some of my friends are stressed all the time because they're trying to do too much. After trying to keep up with schoolwork, studying for SATs, being on sport teams, holding down jobs, and doing chores at home, they don't have any time for themselves. It's important to keep a balance so you don't burn out.”

—Alison R., age 16



### Activity

## Beyond the Classroom

- 1. Summarize** your thoughts on this issue. Do you think some teens are overscheduled? Why do you think they are trying to do so much? How might this affect their mental and emotional health?
- 2. Synthesize** your ideas. Imagine that you are a columnist at a teen magazine. Write an article about balancing responsibilities and activities. Discuss

how teens can tell if they are overscheduled, and provide strategies for maintaining an appropriate activity load.



For more information about teens and stress, use this code at [glencoe.com](http://glencoe.com).