

# Survivor 9: High School Transitions

**Objectives:** SWBAT identify differences between 8th and 9th grade expectations  
SWBAT explore 3-5 ways to support incoming 9th graders

**Time:** 50 minutes

**How Many:** 6- 30 HS students

**Materials:** 2-6 titled posters (depending on the size of your group), with names of 3-5 students above each poster  
On posters 1, 3, 5: When you hear "8th grade," what are the words that come to mind?  
On posters 2, 4, 6: When you hear "9th grade," what are the words that come to mind?  
Markers, crayons, colored pencils  
Timer/stop watch  
Truth About Transitions worksheet copies

**Enroll: (Do Now):** Find your name above a poster around the room. When I say go, your group must write as many words as you can before I say stop. You don't all have to agree, but you DO all have to participate. GO!  
After 2 minutes, say Stop! Groups between posters 1 and 2, 3 and 4, 5 and 6 should rotate and repeat activity. After 2 minutes, have groups put down their pens and sit down.

**Do/Experience:**      **Visualization 8th Grade:**

Instruct participants to have two pieces of paper in front of them. They should also have at hand a pen/ colored pencils or markers. Everything else should be off their desks. Instruct participants to get comfortable for a visualization exercise. They should keep feet firm on the ground and be comfortable in seat with eyes closed, but without falling asleep. Everyone should take a deep breath or two and get out the giggles. Now silently (so they don't interfere with other people's pictures in their heads):

Go back to 8th grade. Where did you go to school? How did you get to school in the morning? Where did you go once you got to school? What time was it? What did it look like from the outside? What were the hallways like? What did you wear?

Who were your teachers? How were your classes? What were your classes like? How long or short were they? Did you have homework? Did you do your homework? How were your grades? What was your favorite class? What was your least favorite class? How many classes did you have?

What was a typical day like? Who were your friends? Where did you hang out? Where there parts of the school you avoided? People you avoided? What did you do at lunch? Were there clubs or sports or anything that you did at lunch or after school?

Where did you live? How were things at home? What did you do on the weekends? How did people treat you? What was something bad that happened? What was something good that happened?

Keep your eyes closed, but wave your hand at my voice if you have a picture of your 8th grade year.

**Individual Drawing**

Once people wave: Silently open your eyes and start to write or draw on one of your papers what you thought about as you visualized your 8th grade. You can title that "8th grade."

Give students about 5-10 minutes to work on their drawing or writing.

While they are doing this move all the 8th grade Do Now Posters together and all the 9th grade Do Now Posters together, hung on the walls so people can see them.

Now you can keep your eyes open or you can close them again. Go back to being that 8th grader and try to remember what it was like to hear where you were going to 9th grade. How did you feel? Scared? Happy? Nervous? Excited? Unhappy? Mad? What stereotypes or questions did you have? What were you looking forward to? What were you not looking forward to?

Now add that to your 8th grade drawing or writing.  
Please stand up, stretch and move with your things one seat over for a fresh perspective.

### **Visualization 9th Grade**

Repeat directions from first visualization.

Imagine when you entered 9th grade or when you transferred to this school

Where did you start high school? How did you get to school in the morning? Where did you go once you got to school? What time was it? What did it look like from the outside? What were the hallways like? What did you wear? What was your first day or week like? Had you ever been to a high school before? Did you know anyone? Where did you hang out? How did you meet people? Who did you meet?

Who were your teachers? How were your classes? How were your grades? What were your classes like? How long or short were they? Did you have homework? Did you do your homework? What was your favorite class? What was your least favorite class?

Were there parts of the school you didn't know or you avoided? People you avoided? Did you ever get lost? What did you do at lunch? What was your schedule like? Were there clubs or sports or anything that you did at lunch or after school?

Where did you live? How were things at home? What did you do on the weekends? How did people treat you? What was something bad that happened? What was something good that happened? If you changed high schools, what was that like? How did you feel about it?

Keep your eyes closed, but wave your hand at my voice if you have a picture of your 9th grade year and, if you transferred, about transferring to our school.

### **9<sup>th</sup> grade drawing**

Once people wave: Silently open your eyes and start to write or draw on one of your papers what you thought about as you visualized your 9th grade and/or first impressions of our school. You can title that one "high school."

After 5-10 minutes, have students put down their materials and get with a partner who is currently not sitting near them. It must be someone they didn't know before high school!

### **Partner and Group Discussion**

In each group, identify who has more words on their pages? That person will go....  
SECOND!

The first person has 2 minutes to talk about 8th grade. If they don't talk for two minutes, then the listener can ask related questions. Stop after two minutes and have the second person talk about 8th grade. Stop after two minutes. The second person will then START by explaining what they wrote or drew about 9th grade for 2 minutes. Repeat through the first person.

Then (if there is time and inclination) get group into a circle or small groups.

Each participant will have 2-4 minutes to use their drawing/writing to talk about some combination of 8th grade and 9th grade/coming to high school. They can pick what to share and what not to share, but they have to talk the whole time. They will get to pick the next person who will go. The rest of the group listens. A timer will keep track of their time.

**Process:** What did you notice in what people said about 8th grade? What stayed with you from 8th grade?

- Take a look at our Do Now posters about "8th Grade." Which is more accurate/which is more stereotypical: our beginning brainstorm or our drawings/reflective writings?
- What were some things that were true for some people in 8th grade?
- Was everyone's 8th grade experience the same? What were some of the differences you heard or wrote or drew about?
- What were some of the stereotypes, questions, or fears that 8th graders seemed to have of high school?
- Let's move to 9th grade/ high school: From the stories and our own experiences, what was the transition from middle to high school like?
- Look at the "9th grade" Do Now Posters and think about people's stories - What are the common things from both 8th grade and high school you notice?
- What are things that are pretty different between 8th grade and high school for some people?

**Label:** One of the things many people spoke about in transitioning into high school was the difference in the systems and going from being known and a big fish to being unknown or feeling really young again, not knowing the system, the school, what to expect, etc.

- Were there things that helped the transition into high school?
- Were there things that made the transition worse?
- What WOULD have helped, if anything?
- Why as peer helpers is it important that we look at this transition? Why am I asking you to remember your own and learn about each other's transitions into high school?
- How could YOU as a peer helper assist in students' transition to high school in general, such as 9th graders, or our school, for people like transfer or recently immigrated students?

**Demonstrate:** Get students into groups of 4 participants. Have them fill out the Truth About Transitions worksheet.

**Review:** Students share an action item from their worksheet with the large group.

**Celebrate:** Find three people you learned something about today and give them a HIGH 5.