



Recommended Differentiation Strategies for High School

For student strengths in ...	Research-based strategy	Brief rationale or definition
Reading	Complex and advanced reading material in subject areas	Textbooks often written at or below grade level – advanced materials increase thinking skills, vocabulary
	Assignments, discussions that emphasize high-level thinking, use of evidence	Adjust level of questions to spur critical and creative thinking
	Advanced vocabulary development	Good readers need accelerated vocabulary development to increase understanding of high level materials
Mathematics/ quantitative reasoning	Pretesting – replace mastered material with enrichment, extension, and/or accelerated material	End-of-unit test used for pre-testing reduces redundancy, builds motivation – single best strategy in math (also called “curriculum compacting”)
	Focus on complex problems with multiple solutions or multiple paths to solutions	Eliminate drill and repetition, allow self-directed problem solving
Writing	Provide direct instruction in professional-level writing techniques, genres	Writers begin to work like practitioners when exposed to professional exemplars & given direct instruction
	Assist student in finding opportunities to publish writing	Competition and real-world experience with feedback hones skills; publishing gives tangible reward
	Allow student to use own strength area in pre-writing	High-level writers use their own linear or non-linear organizational methods to best advantage
Other	Increase student motivation by increasing challenge level	Gifted students often do better with harder material and assignments than with more basic work
	Use contracts for concept and skill learning for students with exceptionally rapid pace of learning	Allows student to “buy time” to pursue independent study, research projects, extensions, enrichment (another type of “curriculum compacting”)
	Allow use of student’s strongest reasoning and processing mode when possible	Highly creative, verbal, or abstract thinkers get the most out of complex material when using their strengths to access and process it

Research shows that when people use their strongest modalities to learn, they perform better, even on traditional tests.