

## Surviving the first few weeks of college

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You made it! First and foremost, congratulations on getting to college.

By now, all of your relatives and neighbours have already asked you where you're going, what you'll be studying, and they've told you that it will be the best four years of your life.

The only problems are:

- 1) You don't know where you're going. You weren't even paying attention on the college tour, and now you're not sure where the bathroom is, much less the chemistry lab.
- 2) You don't know what you're going to study. Sure, you have some ideas, but why does it seem like everyone else has it figured out by now?
- 3) Best four years of your life? No pressure now...

**To clue you in**, here's a basic road map for the first few weeks, while you get settled. Whether it's academic or social situations, these tips will point the way!

### **Where to sit in class?**

Whether your class is held in a stadium or a broom closet, there is a pretty standard formula for where to sit. The **overachievers** typically sit in the front row to get the most face-time with the professor. The **slackers** sit in the back row, particularly in the corners.

Why is this stereotype important? Because the professors hold these assumptions, too, and you will be treated accordingly. The best seat in the house is in the middle rows, slightly to the left or right of centre. This way, you can hear the professor, see everything on the board, and stay out of both **the limelight and the shadows**.

### **Put a face to the name on the roster**

God helps those who help themselves, and so do professors. On the first or second day of class, make sure that you introduce yourself to the professor. Ask or answer a question once per class to show that you're motivated and organized.

If it sounds like you're sucking up a bit, it's because you are -- just by being responsible and proactive. Your efforts will be rewarded when you need to move an exam day or skip a class; guess which students the professors make exceptions for? Bingo.

### **To skip class or not to skip class?**

This is always a tough decision, but it's all about when, where, and why. Never skip a class in the first or last month of the semester. You want to make a good impression with your professor, and you don't want to miss anything that will likely be on your final. Never skip field trips or review sessions, and make sure someone reliable can copy notes on the lecture when you do miss class. The basic rule of thumb is never

skip until you need a mental health day. But when you do, make sure you enjoy your day off!

### **Roommates from the black lagoon**

Remember that form you filled out so **diligently** in order to get paired with the right roommate? Morning person, non-smoker, likes a quiet living space and is relatively neat? Then you walk into your room on move-in day and find yourself face to face with your smoking, once-a-month showering slob of a roommate. Resist the urge **to hit the panic button**, and follow this checklist.

First of all, give him/her a chance and try to make it work. The best roommates are people that you DON'T share the same social circle with, and can serve as an escape from your norm. On the other hand, if you clash too much, sometimes it's better **to pull the plug** sooner rather than later. No matter what, take advantage of roommate counselling or just talk to your RA before you make any decisions.

### **Never sit alone at the cafeteria**

No matter how popular you are, the day will come when you go to the cafeteria and don't know anyone there. Many people groan, but you should cheer, because this is the perfect opportunity to meet someone new! It really doesn't matter who it is; find someone else eating alone and get to know them. Maybe you'll have nothing in common, and you'll end up sitting in silence (which you would have done anyway, sitting alone). But sometimes these **friends-by-random-circumstances** end up being familiar faces around campus and good college buddies.

### **Freedom!**

Mom and Dad don't live down the hall anymore, there's no such thing as **a curfew**, and no one makes you go to class! Suddenly the world turns from temptation into opportunity, and there is a basket of forbidden fruit everywhere you look.

The name of the game is moderation. Study ... in moderation. Sleep... in moderation. Eat and exercise... in moderation. Party and socialize... in moderation.

It's going to take a while **to find that equilibrium** in your schedule where you're challenged, but not stressed. College should be the best time of your life, and if you can find the appropriate balance, you'll be able to walk across that stage with a smile on your face in four short years!

## **VOCABULARY**

### **What do the following words and expressions mean?**

1. bury yourself in books
2. know the subject inside out
3. cram for the exams
4. fall behind with your studies
5. breeze through the exams
6. get the hang of a subject
7. mind went blank

Match the words in Box A with the words in Box B to make correct combinations or collocations.

A	B
carry out receive learn organise take write	an exam a first draft ideas a project a test a degree