

A day in the life of a nerd at nerd camp

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I'm a geek/nerd/pick your adjective, so my parents decided several years ago that I "was not being challenged enough" in school, so they signed me to be tested for some programs for gifted kids. This test was the SAT which I took in 7th grade.

Long story short, I passed. Resulting in me being eligible for "Summer Programs," basically camp where we take classes. (There were also day workshops and week-long things, but we're not talking about that.) The camp takes place at a few different colleges all over the US, but they are all pretty much the same. Now, for a normal day: 6: 00 am - My alarm blares Mr.

Brightside by the Killers in an attempt to wake me up. My alarm is placed strategically across the room so I have to get up to turn it off. I stumble out of bed, hit the power button, but go straight back to bed. My roommate does not move. 6: 10 am - My phone, my backup alarm, blares a noise that sounds like a mixture of static and a fire alarm.

This time when I get up, I stay up. I groggily grab my towel and toiletries and shuffle down the hall to the communal bathroom. (ick!) I don't actually have to get up this early, theoretically, I could sleep until 8: 45, the designated time for classes to meet on the Quad, but I don't want to stink and this is the only way to be sure of there not being a line for the two shower stalls. 7: 30 am - I'm dressed and the required lanyard which holds my meal card and keys is properly around my neck. Yesterday I braided it and wore it as a bracelet but I was maiming too many people while high-fiving with my keys so I switched it back.

My friend from a neighboring dorm texts me that she's ready to go to breakfast. We've gone to the same site for the last few years, though this year we were put in different halls. ???? I round up my friends that do live in my hall and we all go down to the dining hall. 7: 45 am – I grab a plate of eggs, bacon, and potatoes and join my friends at their table. We discuss the merits of these potatoes versus the ones at the site we were at last year.

We deem these inedible. We still eat them though. 8: 20 am – After we're all done eating we make the trek to the admin building which houses the health office. Some of us have delicate mental states which require constant medication...

. JK! ???? A lot of people have morning meds but they usually just consist of vitamins and the occasional Claritin for those with allergies. 8: 30 – 8: 45 am – Everyone hangs out on the Quad until our instructors come to pick us up and take us to our classrooms. We girls discuss the merits of Mr. Darcy as a present-day suitor.

The boys come close to killing us with the frisbee. 9: 00 – Noon – Morning Class. You can study anything from Ethics, to Astronomy, to Latin, Pop Culture, or even Fast-Paced High School Biology, Chemistry or Physics, for those students who want to skip the class in school. The morning session is usually spent waking up and pestering the TA (teacher's assistant) for the frisbee during break. 10: 30 – 10: 45 am – Morning Break.

The girls and boys rush the TA, respectively, hoping for the frisbee.

Theoretically we could all form one big group and play together... but why

over-complicate matters? 10: 45 – Noon – More morning class. Noon – 1: 00 pm – Lunch.

Our class treks back to the Dining Hall to have lunch. We grab food and find friends to sit with. Now we compare the pizza selection. When we're done we go back out to the Quad to hang out until 1 when it's time to go back to class. 1: 00 – 2: 00 pm – Afternoon Class. We spend most of the time devising clever ways to get the teacher to allow us more break time.

Alas, it doesn't work. 2: 00 – 2: 15 pm – Afternoon Break. More lobbying for the frisbee ensues. 2: 15 – 3: 00 pm – More Afternoon class. 3: 30 – 5: 30 pm – Activities. Activities are divided into two blocks, the first ending at 4: 30.

Activities can be anything from Water Balloon Volleyball, Acting Improv, Harry Potter Role-play, Quidditch (most of us are Harry Potter fans....) to the more mundane things like kickball or soccer for the more athletic among us.

Everyone signs up for activities the day before on a sign up sheet that is posted in our dorms. 5: 30 – 6: 45 pm – Dinner. Everyone goes straight from activities to dinner. We continue our discussion on the merits of the food, this time switching gears to the chocolate chips cookies. After you're done eating you're allowed to go back into the dorms, but only at 6: 15. Before that you're required to stay in the dining hall or on the Quad.

7: 00 – 9: 00 pm – More Class! Study Hall. This isn't technically class since there isn't usually any formal learning going on. Usually only the TA is there and everyone works on things from earlier in the day. 9: 00 – 9: 40 pm –

Actual Quad Time. This is the only time on the schedule that is actually, technically, Quad time.

The rest is just time where the only place to really be is on the Quad. We discuss life, death, and our reason for existence. We come to the conclusion that there is no point since we'll all die in the end anyway. Music is blared outside, the frisbee is avoided and people do interpretive dancing. 10: 00 – 10: 15 pm – Hall Meeting. Your hall comes together to listen to your RA make the announcements about the coming days, usually with interpretive dancing, and post the sign up sheet for activities.

10: 30 pm – Light's Out! Everyone must be in their rooms with the lights turned off... But I don't see the words bed or sleep anywhere in that rule...

A day at nerd camp is 50% learning, 20% discussions about everything, 15% discussions about food, 10% avoiding the frisbee on the Quad and 5% interpretive dancing. Nerd Camp's official name is the Center for Talented Youth, which is run by Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. There are other programs similar to it run by other universities in other parts of the country. CTY is way more than just the classes or what you talk about during Quad time, it's about truly being yourself with kids who are just as smart as you and when you want to talk about politics, life, death, or the pros and cons of Gryffindor versus Slytherin you don't get weird looks.