

High school musical: fact or fiction?

Business



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I could barely control my excitement as I waited for hours outside of the movie theater. I wore a blue dress and high heels to resemble the iconic outfit of my favorite character, and prepared for my perspective on life to be changed. Finally, they began seating for the movie. Not only was High School Musical 3 going to be filled with the best G-rated romance and musical numbers, but it was going to give me an insider view of what high school was really like. Growing up, I was the perfect child.

I always followed the rules, did my homework, and got exceptional grades. Walking into the large green doors of my middle school evoked new adventures every day; not only did I get straight A's in my sleep, but I got to hang out with my friends all the time. My excitement for high school grew daily as I began to indulge myself in movies and articles that depicted life as a high schooler. I was ready to dive into this world of knowledge, romance, and friends. My ignorant young mind thought high school was going to be manageable and fun: no studying, barely an hour of homework a night, and hanging out with friends all week. Let's just say, I'd never felt so much disappointment in my life.

High School Musical—the holy grail of childhood movies—set up high and unachievable expectations for me. No one cared about having fun. All the focus was on getting good grades. When college was on the line, the entire school had an aura of harsh competitiveness. Standing outside on the first day of ninth grade, I could feel the stress radiating off of the brick building. I didn't know how I was going to navigate the change in atmosphere.

For the rest of the day, teachers constantly warned us about the dangers of getting bad grades. They said our futures depended on them. Bewilderment overwhelmed me. I stood incredulous in my own thoughts. My actions at fourteen dictated my future? Isn't that too young? Aren't kids supposed to make mistakes? The pressure from the school system and even my own family told me I wasn't mature enough to do anything. I had an undeveloped brain and raging hormones.

Now, everyone expected me to uphold a significant amount of responsibility. The reality of high school left me wondering if I would ever make unforgettable memories as I'd hoped. Walking down the halls of my high school showcased the college-oriented mindset of most students. I regularly heard conversations about the same topic: what grade someone got on an assignment or test. Numbers and five distinct letters controlled discussions. As my classmates walked around the school like sleep-deprived zombies, I heard them complain about their four-hour swim practice, followed by five hours of homework, which resulted in five hours of sleep.

I had one of two choices: to give into the college controlled ideology of perfect grades equals perfect student, or give up. I chose the former of the two. I began studying for hours a night just to forget everything in a week. I swiftly completed projects without comprehending the curriculum. I constantly worried about maintaining a high-grade point average. Suddenly, I didn't spend any time for myself.

When I wasn't at school, I participated in extracurriculars and volunteering. I drowned in my own stress and worries. The curricular overload left me in

awe of how ill-prepared I was transitioning into high school. All of my trusty resources, such as High School Musical, proved themselves dishonest. But why did I have to pick between fantasy and reality? I yearned for an academic, but fun experience.

And I regretted not having the ability to prepare for the upcoming ninth grade school year properly. I never learned how to control time management, develop organizational skills, and plan for college admissions. From the first day of high school, I stood in oblivion as I watched my classmates get a head start to this vying race. All in all, younger students must be aware of the inaccurate representations of the high school experience. Furthermore, the high school system must find an equal balance between time given for schoolwork and time given for personal development.

As much as I would love to balance schoolwork, basketball, musicals, a relationship, and family matters, I'm no Troy Bolton. But every once and awhile, it's fun to imagine high school as a place full of dramatic basketball games, tear-wrenching drama programs, and lively musical numbers, even in the lunchroom.