

Things They Don't Tell You

- Becky Twaalfhoven

In terms of high school, the word “junior” carries numerous implications and expectations, many of which are true. For example, it is true that most juniors don't sleep. College becomes a looming reality, standardized tests actually mean something, and yes, you *do* start having real responsibilities. But there are some things that don't get as much attention despite being just as prevalent in the life of a junior.

1. Sleep is no longer a necessity.

The stereotype of the sleep-deprived, coffee-guzzling junior is accurate. However, sleep-deprived no longer means dysfunctional; on the contrary, over time less sleep feels like more energy. This bizarre phenomenon is unexplainable by science, but it may be related to the buzz of adrenaline you get from knowing that you have to make it through the entire day on three hours of sleep.

2. It's more respectable to fail spectacularly than to get a regular low grade.

Another unexplainable paradox is that after a certain threshold, getting a *really* poor score is less upsetting than just getting a low score. In fact, a terrible score is often a source of humor and conversation that can lead to new friendships.

3. Some people actually do know what they're doing.

When you say you feel behind on the college searches/tours, the usual response is to assure you that everyone is on the same boat. Unfortunately, this is not true. There *are* students who already have a top school and/or major and/or career path in mind; there *are* students who know the rules of the SAT/ACT and honor societies and graduation requirements. That being said, you don't need to know those things to succeed. In fact, it is fairly easy to go through the first two years of high school without even thinking about requirements.

4. It is rarely clear what is happening and why.

It's common practice for details of anything to be released the day of. Room assignments, test topics, event times, schedule changes – all important, and all obscure until the last minute. Part of the “fun” of high school is the element of surprise in everything. For example, on half-days or days with assemblies, where you're supposed to go for the first block is often announced during that first block, or more frequently the passing time when everyone is in the hallways. Similarly, the reason for the homeroom or assembly is usually unknown to the students and teachers for several minutes until another announcement.

The stereotypes of junior year are true, but they are not everything. There are so many more less obvious yet equally unnerving aspects of the year that nobody tells you about, which you just have to figure out for yourself.