

English III 2017-2018

Late Start: Solution or Nightmare?

by Tess Billmire, Xiu Mei Golden, Madeleine Hinson, and Paige Robnett

As students, we all agree that having enough sleep is an issue -- not just for ourselves, but for teens across America. This sleepy trend among American students could have a number of causes, but current researchers point fingers at early school starts. Studies show that arriving at school by 7:50 a.m. (or even earlier) is not healthy for many teenagers. Teen's brains are still developing, so rest is crucial. However, it is very difficult (and maybe impossible) to fit the schedules of 15.1 million American high school students into one time frame. Due to myriad requirements, finding an efficient time frame for the typical school day is a headache in itself.

Students Suffer from Sleep Deprivation

That extra hour of sleep is something almost every teen wants and biologically needs. According to Michael J. Breus, *The Sleep Doctor*, only fifteen percent of teens are getting the amount of sleep their bodies need to function properly. On average, teens sleep six to seven hours each night, when they realistically need about nine hours. 1 Sofia Hawkins, a sophomore at McCall-Donnelly High School, explains that her lack of sleep is problematic in the mornings: "I probably get about six hours of sleep and I always have such a rough time getting out of bed in the morning and have such a lack of motivation to be productive."

However, nine hours of sleep is unrealistic for some students who participate in after-school activities and have impressive amounts of homework. Statistics from researcher Carolyn Crist show that when students begin classes at 8:30 AM or later: ". . . attendance rates and graduation rates improve. . . ." 2 Sleep deprivation results in major impacts on teens such as depression, weight gain, suicidal thoughts, substance abuse, anxiety, and mood swings. Late start studies show a quick improvement in these areas of mental health. Clare Nelson, a student at Boise High School, explains how having just one day of late start (8:30 a.m.) each week benefits her and the overall mood of the student body at her school: "I love late start. . . it is really nice to get that extra sleep!" She adds, "Everyone at Boise High loves it and I honestly look forward to it every week."

Sleep Statistics

With more sleep, students increase their overall performance in school. The University of Minnesota experimented on 9,000 college students and found that their academic achievements

Neverland

by Tess Billmire

Two black chairs with wheels lie across from one another in my family's office. It's really my office, since I reside there for thirteen hours a day. Piles of empty food packages mixed with important assignments lie on my green desk full of doodles. I'm mindlessly watching Minecraft videos while in deep thought about how I want to do nothing. My brain wanders into a dream-like reality; I know it's not real, but it's almost alive. I dream about having a time-controlling watch to transport me earlier in the week so I would've actually finished my chemistry homework. I see myself zipping backwards at the speed of light to my bed seven days ago: a much better, simpler time.

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Time is of the essence, yet the world only heads towards the future. In every moment lies the yearning sensation of anticipation for next step in life. Even simple movie trailers are shown on TV months before their release to excite interest in the future. In high school, it's all about college and how childhood wonders are coming to a close. Being surrounded by imminent occurrences, I find it difficult, almost impossible, to focus on the present. As a high schooler, I'm naturally pessimistic. I yearn to soar towards the past to be young and free again.

As a kid with OCD, I'm obsessed with time. However, my compulsion to know when the bell is going to ring is just the same as that of everyone else. High schoolers are simply eager to reach the end of the day as soon as possible. While days in class crawl slowly by, every school year concludes like a flash of lighting: time flies terrifyingly towards an unknown future. I look towards the past to protect myself from harsh realities. I want to enter a time machine and head towards my three-year-old self.

As a small child with parental guidance, I could play with toys all day and be free. My

improved when they started class later. Cindy Long, writer for NEA Today, says: ". . .when school starts at 7:30 AM, the researchers found that only 34% of students get at least eight hours of sleep. When they begin at 8:35 a.m., up to 60% of students get eight hours. When they start as late as 8:55 AM, 66% of students get eight or more hours of sleep, the recommended amount of sleep for everyone."3

Research also shows that the ideal time to start school is around 9:30 am. This later start time could not only allow students to eat breakfast, but also to complete extra-curricular activities before school. While school sports generally take place in the evening, scientists recommend exercising earlier to gain a boost of energy and to be ready to take on the day. President of the California Sleep Society, Dr. Anoop Karippot, believes that there is enough scientific evidence supporting issues of sleep deprivation, and that a change in start times by one hour can make a huge difference in the quality of student life. 4

Racing Against Time

Contrary to common opinion, a late start does not always mean more sleep. While many students and faculty yearn for that "extra five minutes," the likelihood of extra time actually happening is minimal. A late start ultimately means a community schedule shift, where students may stay up later to compensate for the time they missed while sleeping that morning. Schools with late starts have found that extracurricular activities sometimes end as late as 10:30 PM. When students such as Rachel Warrens, a student at San Diego's High Tech High, come home after school, most scroll through social media and catch up on the latest television shows before starting on their homework. These habits are not subject to change and the hours that were originally spent early in the morning at school will likely be reallocated to finishing homework late at night.

Statistics Also Support Concerns

The current system is already a hassle for some parents who drive their children to school. Pushing school start times later in the morning may interfere with parents' work schedules, creating a logistical nightmare. While students may benefit from starting school later, their parents are still required to show up at the standard time. Some students have the luxury of driving themselves to school, but students relying on their parents may have trouble finding a new ride, should school districts implement later start times. At Mission Bay High School in California, at least 60% of the students are bused in from all over the county. A change in schedules can create problems such as having to recruit new drivers, redesign routes, and potentially increase costs.

Late Start Backlash

imagination was encouraged with friendly nods from adults who would try not to crush my soul. Judgement and advice from my mother were saved for another day. Too young to be a prisoner of the world, I was unaware of harsh realities, responsibilities, and criticism. If I were three again, worrisome thoughts of homework and grades would be absent from my brain. My parents would set up play dates for me, so a lack of friends would not plague my adolescent mind. Being three was a utopia, with two noble servants at my side and the world in the palm of my hand.

This constant dream of having a time machine replays in my mind every day. As a fifteen-year-old sophomore locked into reality, I have no way to escape. For anyone who has passed the age of thirteen, not focusing on the tragic reality set in front of her makes her seem ignorant.

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Looking at an edited essay, I internally cringe at my efforts or lack thereof. I quickly flip through the comments and then stuff it into a blue folder for later. The internal gears in my brain begin turning to start mentally fixing my mistakes, but I stop those from getting too far. Overwhelmed with stress and disappointment, I feel angry that my hard labor of typing on a laptop wasn't enough. I'll admit I don't always put my heart and soul into every word I manually type, but it's still discouraging. The reality is I need to learn and fix the endless grammar mistakes and nonsensical sentences. Yet, especially with essays, while I occasionally think about them, I never take action. Sometimes that's how the world works. Without an immediate feeling of satisfaction and progression, life seems meaningless. Maybe this is why it's so hard to move forward.

Society morphs the world into a non-childish zone. However, as miserable as the present sometimes seems, rays of sunshine always break through. Constantly, I look back on the previous week and think about how easy it was. I've always had a difficult time appreciating the present rather than the past, but recently it's dawned on me that I can be forever young in the present. In the future I can look back and remember the glory days. My perception of time changes my current reality into a magical

A late start is no different than daylight savings: humans do adapt in a matter of weeks. A student's entire schedule would be pushed ahead an hour, resulting in an extra hour to sleep in. ³ However, this adjustment results in going to bed an hour later and getting the same amount of sleep. A teacher in San Diego reflects: "If I know that I [teach] at 9:00 in the morning, I tend to stay up later. . . whereas if I know I have a 7:30 class. . . I get myself to bed at a reasonable time." Both students and faculty are prone to adjusting their internal clocks to fit in all they want to accomplish in a day.

By starting later, schools will experience a series of productivity problems. In the morning of an average school day, students arrive with "a full energy tank," but as school continues, fatigue sets in and they put less effort into their work. By 3:00 pm, students who are still in school describe it as "boring and slow." Warrens, of High Tech High, where they already start late, adds: "In general, because our last class doesn't end until 3:40, it just kind of gets slow at the end of the day. Everyone feels it." Late starts would only decrease the rate at which students stay focused, and by the end of the day, productivity levels would be very low.

Solutions?

Sleep is scientifically beneficial to adolescents' brains. It is important that communities across America take small steps toward later starts to influence teens' lives in a positive way. Late starts may be one key to solving the issues of this tiresome generation. However, everyone has a different biological rhythm, so late starts may be a solution for some and a nightmare for others. It will take a team effort between schools and families to meet the needs of teenagers and guide them to better follow their own circadian rhythms.

Endnotes

1 -- Breus, Michael. *Sleep Impacts Everyone*.

<https://www.thesleepdoctor.com/?slimstat-opt-out=true>

2 -- Crist, Carolyn. *Later high school start times linked to higher attendance, graduation rates*. February 10, 2017. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-teens-education/late-high-school-start-times-linked-to-higher-attendance-graduation-rates-idUSKBN15P2F7>

3 -- Long, Cindy. *The Pros and Cons of Later School Start Times: Will Extra Zzz's Bring Teens More A's?* March 20, 2014. <http://neatoday.org/2014/03/20/extras-zzzs-in-the-morning-may-bring-teens-more-as-in-school/>

4 -- Karippot, Anoop. *SD Unified takes first steps to later start times*. Interviewed by Gary Warth. October 11, 2017. <http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/education/sd-me-start-times-20171011-story.html>

The Extent of Stereotypes

by Xiu Mei Golden

My mother has always had high expectations. Last week, I received yet another spiel: "Xiu Mei, this is the year that counts! This is

funland.

This past year I've branched out, away from my comfort zone. I've put in an excruciating amount of effort to repair my broken social life. After three friend breakups, I've finally learned that I'm trying too hard. I'm so absorbed into my academic life that I associate effort with success. This mindset makes me seem even more awkward and desperate, which scares others away. I'm beginning to grow socially from my embarrassing mistakes. However, I'd rather keep the growth and burn the memories. The lingering pain from these experiences is sometimes too hard to bear.

My memories shut out the wretched, embarrassing moments in my life, leaving only the beautiful. We glorify our past; perhaps that's why our minds are stuck in repetitive gears. Current murky waters block visualization of a realistic future, and entrap their victims in a vortex of pessimism. However, once past each terrible situation, the full scope of what happened becomes clear. I will look back fondly on these high school years, daydreaming about my friends and toilet-papering popular kids' houses during Homecoming. I don't need a time machine to relive the parts of life that I remember the most. Age is just a number. My own memories will keep me limitless, and forever young.

Root of Corruption

by Madeleine Hinson

Finals week, I can easily say, is the worst week of the entire school year. Last year during these horrific exams, I specifically worried about my physical science test. I went around finding peers who had already taken it and interrogating them about how the test was. Most told me it was "so hard" and that they had "probably failed." I convinced myself that I was going to score badly but to not be disappointed because everyone did, right? I had such low expectations of myself that I could not even focus on reading the questions on the final. I ended up doing poorly on this test, not due to its difficulty, but because of my preconceived ideas, which engulfed my mind during the exam.

when schools are going to look at your transcripts. That means you need to get all the volunteering hours in you possibly can, straight A's, and you need to boost your SAT scores!"¹ Lectures like these often give me a reality check on my future, encouraging better performance and a stronger attention span. However, this pressure also causes stress and takes time away from my experiencing the ups and downs of simply being a teenager.

As an Asian-American student, I have always been pushed to succeed, taking difficult classes and many extracurriculars. This drive was encouraged by my "tiger mom" which, by definition, is an overly-strict Chinese mother pushing for high academic achievement. My mother has created her own version: a white mother urging me to perform at a rigorous level so that I may "do something with my life." Considering my heritage, one would think that I am a high-performing student due to the classic Asian stereotype. Yet, to me, my mother's fastidious demands for a "perfect" daughter seem to be the underlying cause.

My mother's excuse for my upbringing is that I turned her into a helicopter parent, that I am the one that "wants to go to the Ivy League." While this may have an aspect of truth (I do have dreams of attending Brown University), I suspect that the idea has been hardwired into my brain through years of living with my mom. On the other hand, I constantly push myself to do my best, working late into the night until my work reaches my own high standards. I work long after my mother has gone to bed; after her nagging stops and even after she is aware that I am still awake. I am not sure if I push myself, or if my mother has raised my standards to her expectations.

Other adopted Asian-American friends have indistinguishable traits from my own. They too have good test scores even though they grew up in white households: scores good enough to land one of them at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where the average SAT score is a whopping 1520.² The mean SAT test scores of Asian Students are significantly higher than those of almost all other ethnicities. Math scores alone are sixty points higher than those of the runner up.³ These statistics cause me to doubt my own theory that my mom has simply implanted her ideals into my brain. There may be a possibility that I came to this country, at the age of one, pre-programmed to meet high standards.

This apparently racist theory that Asians have high academic standards and work ethics, matches the definition which describes racism as believing one's own race is superior. However, in America it is necessary for immigrants to have that drive; Asian Americans are expected to perform better all across the country. Despite race-blind admissions, some colleges require higher grades and test scores from Asian American students than from other ethnicities.⁴ The standards for Asian American students are high throughout the United States, not just in my own community,

Mindset can easily overpower knowledge and sabotage success. When something is expected to go a certain way, it usually does go that way. Even a minor suggestion can control outcomes. In *Psychology Today*, researcher Polly Campbell relates how suggestions can completely affect an experience for better or for worse:

The reason, they say, is attributable to something called response expectancies. This means that the way we anticipate our response to a situation influences how we will actually respond. In other words, once you expect something to happen, your behaviors, thoughts, and reactions will actually contribute to making that expectation occur.

Initial suggestions can shape reality. This begins with how humans react to each suggestion, whether positive or negative: the way we anticipate something determines results.

In all aspects of my life, I request suggestions. I like evaluating the opinions of others before I shape my own. Most of my opinions and concerns are influenced by suggestion. Once I expect something, the likeliness of my expectation to occur becomes more possible. I become set on one opinion without absorbing anything else around me. Most of the time, this close-minded, quick-to-judge mindset negatively affects the way I think for myself. It noticeably affects my relationships with those who have differing opinions.

In political matters such as gun control (which has been very prevalent due to recent school shootings), I listen to the opposing opinions of people who are for more control or against it. One of my classmates explained her fear because guns can be so easy to purchase at such a young age and background checks are taken lightly. Other classmates oppose gun control because they say it is ineffective. I support the passing of more gun laws and control because others' opinions helped me assess what I felt made the most sense. My thoughts about the best solution for stopping the ongoing crime of public shootings were molded by the ideas of my peers.

This stubborn thought process makes it hard for me to accomplish anything on my own because

pressuring these students to perform at a higher level.

The expectation to meet these standards causes pressure on students. The fear of failure, or even a B grade in school, causes teenagers unnecessary stress. Personally, I feel pressured to meet this stereotype, and, by reaching the standards that society sets, I add more data to the claim that "Asians do well in school." This then continues a cycle of pressure on generations of Asian-American students to perform well. This pressure from the "great wall of statistics" pushes students, like me, to achieve high goals. Asian Americans are not smarter. They simply feel the need to meet high expectations and therefore perform to expected standards. Asian students nationwide have been pressured into behaving like the "model minority." In my case it is my mother who nags me to stress over a low A, while others receive pressure either from their communities or their families.

Endnotes

1 -- Golden, Kathy, San Diego, CA, November 5, 2017.

2 -- MIT SAT Score and GPA, Prep Scholar,

<http://www.prepscholar.com/sat/s/colleges/MIT-SAT-scores-GPA> (accessed April 15, 2018).

3 -- Scott Jashchik, *The Numbers and the Arguments on Asian Admissions*, Inside Higher ED, August 7, 2017,

<https://www.insidehighered.com/admissions/article/2017/08/07/look-data-and-arguments-about-asian-americans-and-admissions-elite> (accessed April 15, 2018).

4 -- Ibid.

Beauty School Dropout

by Paige Robnett

Don't care. Not even one tiny bit.

And here I have summed up the average attitude of every American teenager, ever. At this time in our lives high-schoolers like me (at the ripe and ready age of seventeen) are entitled to this attitude. Our lives are crammed with eight hours of school, five days a week; sports, homework, jobs, family duties, house chores, and the transporting of siblings. And if that is not enough we also have to fit in some sleep too. Scientists recommend about eight hours, but we have to make five or six hours work. Our young lives have been crammed with so much busy work and responsibility that there's no time to stop and smell the roses. Being tired is a given, being grumpy is okay, and not caring because we've been pushed to the limit is the status quo. On top of busy schedules we have changing bodies, this new frontal lobe that we don't know what to do with, hormones, sleep issues, social needs, and weird emotions that also need to be handled. It's a very hard, confusing time in our lives. The modern world does not make it any easier.

My schedule is hectic. I work four or five days a week, I figure skate, I go to school, and I have a killer English class that may or may not make me want to keel over sometimes. So yes, I am tired

making decisions suddenly becomes war.

Narrow-minded individuals who think their opinions are superior to those of others create controversy all over the world. Although no public figure has ever come out and blatantly said this, some officials give no value to the contrasting side.

Social platforms like Twitter are perfect examples of narcissistic, superior attitudes. People see something they disagree with and completely explode and bash an individual who believes in something they don't. Religion, politics, moral epidemics, and plastic surgery are the most active topics I see arguments on. I realized such opposition is due to the fact that people are either for or against these topics. There are not really multiple ways to blend one outlook or another.

Some controversy is simply caused by short-sighted evaluation. People are terrified even learning about ideas that contradict their own. Curriculum within the state of Idaho has taken out lessons on human evolution because, in religious circles, this theory is very controversial. Some parents of children taking biology are infuriated with the topic of evolution in general because it differs from their religious beliefs. Humans set their minds on one side only: as if there were a left and right. Another side of an argument may completely throw off a theory, causing someone to possibly reflect negatively on their own opinion.

Reflecting and being unsure of something you were once so sure about can be nerve-racking, to say the least. When I was young and very studious, I was set on the idea of attending a prestigious school like Harvard or Stanford, wanting to be like the successful characters in movies. My heart was set on this goal for a short period of time, until I learned more about how strenuous this process would be.

Also, my family not being wealthy, financial aid would be a must. I realized the difficulty of even being accepted into an Ivy League school after daydreaming in class all day about rolling in money and driving nice cars, while in a blazer of course. I was in denial that I might need to reconsider or really consider the reality of

all the time. I do understand the real world is much more intense. But I find myself asking: why is my life so hectic that I shut down and stop caring? Many students are pushed to their limits in high school and college and then overload and shut down. This seems to be a trend among many of my friends and fellow students: they have so much on their plates that their motivation peters out because the amount of work is so discouraging. Maybe this nationwide feeling of failing to live up to expectations is the reason why 1.3 million high schoolers drop out every year. There could be many factors influencing students to drop out of school, but feeling like a failure, and like you have no support from teachers, is a big one. Preparing kids for adult life is beneficial, but we are only KIDS. Trying to be a kid but also an adult at the same time is difficult.

It's not just school that makes our lives so frustrating; the biological, social, and psychological aspects of being being a 21st century teenager are so agonizing. All adults did go to school once upon a time, and they all went through the same hell. But today's education standards seem way more intense. Think of teachers as bosses. I have eight classes, so I have eight bosses. Each one has different standards and requirements. What they all have in common is that they all assign homework. So, imagine an adult having eight bosses: I believe this could result in a majority of today's adults going AWOL.

Lack of sleep is also a big factor in today's teenagers' lack of attentiveness. Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University, William Dement, says: "Sending kids to school at 7 a.m. is the equivalent to sending an adult to work at 4 in the morning."¹ Many adults think it's just a teenage flaw but actually our circadian rhythms are two hours behind a grown human's, so we actually can't help feeling exhausted.

Rebellion seems to be every parent's nightmare, but it is their child's daydream. Our lives are not our own. Everything is decided for teens: what we study, our schedule, what we wear, and what we do. This lack of control over life can cause stress in many people, but adults have the autonomy to do what they please. If teenagers even try to take back some control, it's called rebellion. Feeling as if there's no freedom, control, or self-authority allows no opportunity for fun or self-expression. When a school requires teens to take this SAT test, get this GPA, get into this college, it becomes hard to feel motivated. When I set my goals to match my own perspective of perfection, I am more motivated to achieve them. I want to set my own destiny, not let my high school place me on the college assembly line.

The reality of it all is that being a teenager in this time is weird. The world is in an awkward transition phase for employment, where people are being swapped out for artificial intelligence. Teenagers receive instant gratification from their smart phones and through managing their online shopping. School is becoming harder and harder, and the expectations for a successful life are

accomplishing such a goal.

I have been in denial time after time, after rethinking something I was so set on. Having many "disappointing" experiences like this one, I have become more grounded and have set lower expectations for myself. I believe this is a reoccurring cycle for many. After being let down on the almost Utopic picture of life in your mind, it becomes easier to expect less.

Having unrealistic goals motivates people to work hard and focus. However, no matter how hard a person works, she is often unsatisfied. I constantly want more, even after I accomplish or receive everything I thought I wanted. This drive for more seems to be part of human nature, causing people to strive to "one up" each other. As I have continued to mature, my awareness of natural selection has heightened a lot. Kids I have known for years have started to form groups based on their accumulation of money and their status. The smartest kids are the ones who are said to have the most "potential" for a future and are recognized by teachers. The athletic kids make varsity and start at the games, while more average players sit on the sidelines and watch.

As people get older, this natural selection begins to contribute to how well a person will do in life. I cannot help but feel as though my placement and status in life is based on my test scores, how fast I can run, or how much money my parents make. I continue to grow, but not into a person I feel complete confidence in. This feeling is caused by society at school and in sports, because in complete truth I am not extraordinary at anything. I do, however, continue to be passionate and try my hardest. Yet, it is hard to feel comfortable in a world that has become so competitive, only approving the best of the best.

Although feeling this way can be unhealthy, these thoughts truthfully keep me on my toes, striving to be better every school year or athletic season. I try my hardest; but do not expect anything in return. This results in my improving or trying new things. When I do succeed, I am pleasantly surprised and avoid the melancholy outcome that is disappointment.

Endnotes

1 -- Campbell, P. (2015, April). *4 Ways The Power Of*

higher. The social scene, with cliques and mean girls mixed with social media, is more treacherous than ever. Today's kids have so much to live up to and worry about. I know my parents don't remember their teenage years ever being so intimidating and debilitating. Times might be swiftly changing for the better, but the lives of teenagers are suffering in an uncontrolled, slow-burning hell. Who could possibly care about a life like that?

Endnotes

1 -- Hamilton, Jan. *Reasons Why Teens Today are Under So Much Stress*. April 18, 2018. <http://222.doorwaysarizona.com/reasons-why-teens-today-are-under-so-much-stress/>.

Suggestion Can Change Your Life.
