

# Farewell

I thought a long time about what I wanted to say to all of you today. I wanted to be funny, I wanted to sound mature. I wanted to inspire you, to make you laugh, or, yes, even make you cry. But I'm just the Valedictorian. The only reason I'm standing in front of you today is because I got good grades. And trust me, if I'd known that my GPA would determine whether or not I had to speak in front of hundreds of people, I might have done a few things differently.

Yet here I am today, standing in front of you. It feels strange, being at the grand age of 18—and really, I'm younger than most of my class anyways, so what advice could I possibly have to offer that would motivate our class? So I decided to start my speech off of a simple piece of logic: "Almost everything we need to know in life, we learned in Mr. Brown's class." Confused? Don't worry, I'll explain:

For the first time in several years, the entire senior class (minus the foreign exchange students), was placed in a single classroom for World Literature, every day. Now you're probably asking yourself, "who in the world is brave enough to handle us?" Because, let's face it, we're a very... unique group of students. But that person was Mr. Brown, and somehow he managed to tango with us for an entire year.

Our class became very fond of Mr. Brown, and I think we all agree that we grew much closer together as a class, and as a family, during those rough fourth periods. But Mr. Brown probably didn't realize that we were learning much more in his class.

We learned:

1. It is never too late to become a connoisseur of the English language.
2. You can never watch a movie with the volume up too loud—if it's too loud, you're too old.
3. Working hard will move you forward in life, but running cross country will get you there faster.
4. Don't make the same mistake twice, and if you do, don't make it a third time..So don't cheat—and if you do cheat, don't cheat next time.
5. Lies only exist if you believe in them—For example, there is no such thing as magic! Except for the card game.
6. EVERYTHING can be associated with logging metaphors.
7. Fear is the root of all evil: especially the three check mark system.
8. Define your own rules for success: if a book is longer than 300 pages, it can also be 2 books.
9. Be resourceful—if a large water jug breaks open on the floor, use a sweatshirt to soak up the water—also, don't ask Bridger to mop.
10. You're never too old for a timeout.
11. Follow your gut—you'll thank yourself later. If someone tells you to answer 3 questions

so you can leave class early, don't fall for it: it's a trap to keep you in class longer.

12. If you don't know an answer to a jeopardy question, compliment Brown's mustache. You might just get "brownie points".

13. Don't take your life too seriously, because no one else does, meaning that public humiliation must be good for you.

14. Bad words aren't bad words unless Brown hears them.

15. Life isn't fair, but it's still good, and putting tape on the bottom of Mr. Brown's mouse is always funny, no matter how many times you do it.

Are you crying yet? No? I guess I'll keep going then...

Now, I'd like to take you on a journey back in time—12 years ago. We're in Mrs. Nice's kindergarten class, writing our letters, crying because we miss our mommies and daddies, and making stone soup. We don't really know anyone, and we feel as though the world revolves around what we're having for lunch.

Let's fast forward to 3rd grade. We've gotten used to waking up early every morning, we've made friends, and we've discovered "silent ball". Before long, we've learned our multiplication tables, how to write in cursive, and how to throw the ball at someone just right to get them out, make them cry, or both.

We're now in middle school. We go to outdoor school where Mr. Ward and Mr. Schwartz try to convince us to shower and use deodorant because, well, we stink. Girls and boys no longer have cooties, and we are thrust into the whirlwind of teenage drama.

Now we're freshman. We feel like we are on top of the world, but after homecoming week, we realize it is not the case. We've successfully mastered the art of personal hygiene, and have reached the full capacity of teenage drama.

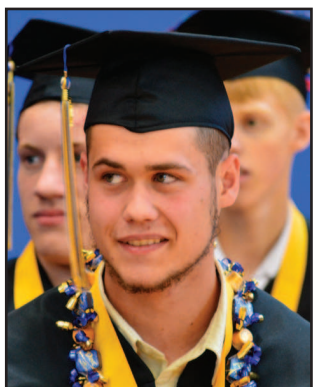
And now we're seniors. There are so many cliché phrases I could say, but I'm afraid none of them really fit what we're all feeling right now. We've gone from diapers to caps and gowns. I said earlier that I wanted to inspire you. I wish I could tell you everything gets easier from here on out, but honestly it doesn't. For the next ten years, we will be making the biggest, most life-changing decisions ever. Think about it: where will you be? Some of us will have families, some of us will be college graduates. Some of us will have our dream jobs, or maybe our dream car. But my advice to you is simple, and maybe even a little silly. But I hope you'll take it seriously, or at least as seriously as you can. Remember, I'm just the valedictorian.

"Live YOUR life". Don't ever let someone tell you how to live. Your story is unique, and nobody can determine your ending for you. Remember those plot diagrams we made in Mrs. McSwain's class in 6th grade? Every protagonist has trials to overcome, like, say, writing a speech for graduation, before we reach our climax. Graduating high school is just the beginning. Our story isn't over. But we're ready to turn the page. We've spent our whole lives preparing for this moment. So just remember, ladies and gentlemen, almost everything we need to know in life, we learned in Mr. Brown's class. Thank you.

Laura Rice  
Valedictorian



Ani Danielyan



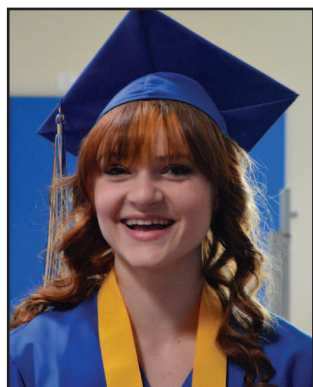
Tyler Kent



MaCayla Fennell



Bo Clark



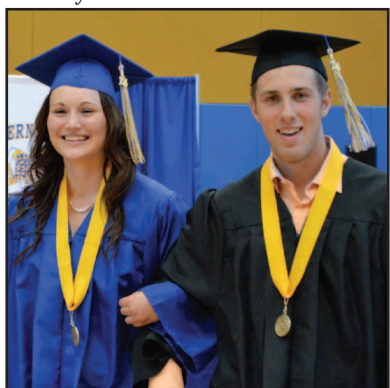
Jennifer Hayes



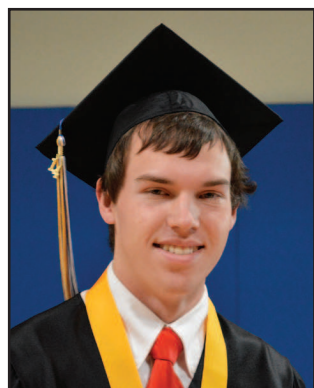
Jeremiah Hammons



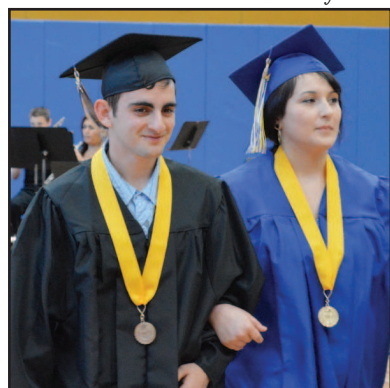
Heather Patton



Katerina Brejchova & Sam Hout



Peter Atkinson



Shavarsh Muradyan & Andrea Lezama



Nikita McCord