

Student Views

This week we asked Trevians what they're being for Halloween. Here's what they said...



Lila Formicola, Sophomore

"I'm going as the best Ninja Turtle: Michelangelo."



Grant Condry, Junior

"I'm going as a banana because it's the only costume I have."



Michelle Verlinsky, Junior

"My friends and I are going as 'funk' boys from Lagniappe last year."



Adam Peterson, Senior

"I was going to go as Ken Bone, but he is kind of a creep. Now I'm going as a Canucks player."



Ethan Caruso, Senior

"I'm going as a shark. All of my friends tell me I look like Bruce from finding Nemo."

When writing becomes an equation



by Sam Blanc

I remember the first essay ever assigned to me. It was in fifth grade and I was terrified. I remember thinking 'essays are for older kids. I don't know how to write like this.'

Our teachers had a solution--many, actually. There were copious packets, days of explanations, readings and examples and powerpoints and practice. And there was the dreaded graphic organizer.

Graphic organizers, you remember, were the bane of middle school writing class. They were long, tedious, and arranged who-knows-how, up and down and side to side all around the page with only thin arrows to guide you, half-faded from 30 runs through the copy machine.

Even then, I felt limited by the format. Hooks and topic sentences were okay, but even the smallest details had to be mapped out. I remember having to add sentences I thought didn't fit and having to remove sentences that I liked just to fit the code that our teacher had given us for an algorithmically superior essay.

My essays, I'm sure, would've been bad with or without a graphic organizer, but I didn't even get to feel like I was writing my own papers. It didn't sound like me. It sounded like everyone because everyone had to write exactly the same.

I didn't--I still don't--understand how anyone could be objectively wrong writing a narrative essay, an essay about your own story and nothing else. Everything became quantitative. It was math with letters...and I don't like math very much.

They did help explain the concept of essay writing. It's clear to me why we had graphic organizers; It's a good tool to help teach students to write a basic essay.

The problem is no one ever really teaches students how to advance beyond that. Every element of writing is touched on throughout middle school--grammar, word choice, sentence structure--but when it comes to putting an essay together, the most fundamental part of any paper, everyone just kind of left it at the prototypical five paragraph essay.

I work at the Reading and Writing Center (this is a shameless plug; visit the RWC in room 326 during any free period you have) which means I see students' essays all the time.

They're a little bit jumbled sometimes. Too many good ideas in one place can make even a masterpiece into a mess. But students are often hesitant to take a chance when grades are at stake.

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I've talked to people who weren't even aware that they could split up a paragraph on their own accord.

It's like a weight lifted off their shoulders when they press down the tab key for the sixth time. We've been writing for years. We're in high school, on the verge of adulthood. So how is it that some people still don't feel comfortable writing an essay?

It's certainly not the students' fault that they're uncomfortable writing. No one liked filling those graphic organizers out; continuing on with that style couldn't have been

high up on any students' to-do list.

It's just that we're never taught to digress from the template. Getting the grade and developing a unique style of writing are all too often entirely separate entities.

Abstract creativity is exchanged for fill-in-the-blanks. Why would any student take a chance on writing an essay their own way when they've always been told to plug it into the perfect equation?

Writing is definitely subjective, and I understand that it's hard to grade without quantitative guidelines, but maybe a bit of a grey area is worth it if it helps students take control of their own writing.

The point of school is to learn, to make a mark in the real world, not just to get a grade. Looking at writing on a student by student basis can help students get their grades by trying new things and growing as a writer instead of using a scale that doesn't take into account inherent ability.

Writing is an important aspect of almost any job; everyone needs to feel comfortable doing it without being stuck on the same basic layout.

Not every essay is going to be entirely creative, that's for sure, but there's some element of individuality in creating any message from just thoughts and graphite.

So I'd encourage teachers to tell students it's alright to have a little bit of fun in their writing, even if it is just adding a sixth paragraph.



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Do the Monster Mash one last time this Halloween



by Max Minogue

It's that time of year again! Time to whip together the sexiest cat costume (sexiest dog costume for the boys out there) you can think of, and start texting your friends, because Halloween is coming.

To a lot of high school kids, Halloween is seen as a mandatory time to go out and party. After all, that's what they did in "Mean Girls," and nobody wants to go and Lindsay Lohan it up by wearing an ugly bride of Frankenstein costume.

Unless you're a Wiccan or Pagan, Halloween isn't an official religious holiday. However, for most kids, it was (and is) one of the holiest holidays out there.

Picture those years when you were a little pumpkin or superhero wobbling along the sidewalk with your parents, clutching the handle of that quintessential plastic pumpkin container.

Years later, Halloween got even more exciting once trick-or-treating turned into something done with a group of friends; no parental supervision and all shenanigans, with original and funny costumes, funny at least to middle schoolers.

My personal favorite at the time was fourth-grade me going as a "Mexican Werewolf," which consisted of me wearing a werewolf costume and an oversized, heavy sombrero my mom brought back from a business trip.

Of course, this was before the issue of cultural appropriation in Halloween was brought to light, and

is not something that I endorse or agree with.

Every year since 5th grade, I would say that it was my last year trick-or-treating, and that would be the end of it, but I kept it on until probably 7th grade, when I came to the traumatic realization that I was too old to trick-or-treat, a rite of passage akin to finding out Santa Claus isn't real yet somehow even worse.

This completely went against my 2nd grade promise to myself that I would be trick-or-treating every year in my childhood until age 18.

So here I am, a senior in high school, not preparing to go trick-or-treating despite the fact that seven-year-old me pledged otherwise.

Call me sentimental, but I don't think, nor do I want, my last Halloween as a kid to devolve into an occasion of going to some party and look good doing it.

I'm not claiming that teenagers should go out and dress up as pumpkins and ask mom and dad to take them trick-or-treating. That would be... not okay.

But rather, enjoy the holiday for what it is, because it's still a special occasion and the one time where it's acceptable to play dress-up.

Go ahead and wear a costume to school, especially if you're a junior or senior. Maybe don't buy pre-made batman costume, but hit up a Salvation Army or Goodwill to try and construct something yourself.

Watch a scary movie! Eat candy and junk food, even if you had to buy it! Be spooky and sentimental and enjoy the night!

At the very least, if you end up going to a Halloween party on that fateful, spooky night, at least have some decorations or a scary playlist: how's "The Monster Mash" on loop for a terrifying night?

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