

How to Survive Your Freshman Year: Fourth Edition

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Hundreds of Heads Books

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From older friends to siblings to parents, there's no shortage of college graduates willing to share their battle stories: all-nighters over cups of coffee, frat parties, that awful dormitory dining hall. Their tales, though valuable, only represent a fragment of the entire college experience—they're parts of a vast puzzle, one that incoming college freshmen need to piece together for themselves upon enrolling at their chosen university. Thankfully, *How to Survive Your Freshman Year* provides a detailed, portable resource for freshmen. The book is comprised of anecdotes from college administrators and professionals, and includes an easy-to-follow legend that marks tales as cautionary or classic; its chapter headings clearly demarcate the various discussed topics, from "Leaving Home" to "Online Communities and College Life" to "Fashion & (Eventually) Laundry."

Opinions and insights vary wildly throughout this book. While some students caution against randomly assigned roommates, others celebrate the adventure of meeting a stranger for the first time. All stories, however, are candid, making this book a relevant and aware—and sometimes, quite funny—resource for incoming freshmen. "Leaving home," announces one student, "is all about you and your parents each having sex...more easily." Other students speak frankly about grade pressure, drinking on campus, and the hardship of being far from home.

The diversity of schools cited in this book—as students offer opinions from Ivy League colleges, Big Ten schools, urban universities, and everything in between—adds to this inclusive, honest portrayal of freshman life. One student offers: "You're going to meet people of different backgrounds and beliefs...you need an openness to learn and an openness to accept." This awareness of difference is perhaps the most helpful advice the book offers, and it sets the example by its comprehensive examination of the subject. To balance the occasional "bad advice" (like one student's suggestion to drink before leaving the dorms), professors and administrators offer their own perspective, encouraging experience but with a more tempered, calming approach.

The college-prep section of the bookstore now offers hundreds of self-help books, many of them written by adults whose freshman years are decades past. *How To Survive Your Freshman Year* offers a holistic alternative: a book chock-full of humorous, contemporary student-derived insights grounded with the educated wisdom of higher-ed professional adults. Somewhere among the dirty laundry and open boxes of Pop-Tarts, this book should find a home in college dorms across the country.

RACHEL MENNIES (July 30, 2010)

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