

Joining the Social Studies UIL Academic Team...Sorta

It is about to be my junior year and I want to apply to join the National Honors Society club of my high school. Just like every other person who ever joins a club at my high school, I only want to join the National Honors Society so that I can put it on my resume. That's how clubs in high school work. Clubs in high school aren't for people to make friends. They aren't for people to have fun. They aren't for people to meet other people who have a common interest. Clubs only exist in high school to boost resumes. That's why I'm joining National Honors Society. However, there's one problem. I have to join two clubs before I am allowed to apply to the National Honors Society.

Like any other person who looks for clubs to put on their resume, I am looking to join some clubs that don't meet very often in order to satisfy this requirement for National Honors Society in the easiest possible way. That's where the idea of joining the Social Studies UIL Academic Team comes in. A former social studies teacher of mine is going to be in charge of the SS UIL team. At first, I'm not interested in the idea at all. If you read the US History story from DumbCollegeStories, you probably know how good I am at social studies (not).

My former social studies teacher starts explaining how the SS UIL team is going to work. She says that there will be tryouts for the team and that the team will accept five people. She tells me that she doesn't want people to feel like they tried out and practiced for nothing so if they happen to not make the team, they can still put it on their resume. This sounds great. So I can just tryout and make sure I don't make the team. As a result, I sign up for the tryouts for the SS UIL

team. Another problem arises. It gets close to the day of tryouts and only four others signed up, which guarantees that I am going to be placed on the team if no one else signs up for the tryouts. I go around telling as many people as I can about the SS UIL team tryouts since I don't want to actually make the team. Finally, two others sign up for the tryouts.

It's the day of the tryouts now. We get a social studies test and the people who make the top five scores are going to make the SS UIL team. I need five of the six others to score better than me. I could try to miss every question on purpose but then the teacher might get mad at me and not let me use it on my resume if I didn't actually try. I start to brainstorm a number that represents the lowest score that I can get such that she still thinks I tried by hardest. She had me as a teacher last year and wasn't impressed by me so I think I can score pretty low and she'll just think I'm that dumb. Let's try for a 34. Sure enough, I score in the 30s and get the lowest score out of everyone there. Five people make the team and I'm not one of them. I don't have to go to any of the meetings or competitions now. I put SS UIL on my resume and make it into National Honor Society for the following year.

Substitute Teacher Starts Paper Airplane Fight

It's just another day in Algebra 2 class with a substitute. No one knows how to do any of the problems we were assigned since there was no lecture over the material that the homework is over. The substitute doesn't know how to do it either. A random student starts trying to make a

paper airplane as all cool kids do whenever there is nothing to do. The guy finishes the paper airplane and then leaves it on his desk as he turns around to tell his friends how great his paper airplane making skills are. The substitute overhears the conversation. He walks up to look at the paper airplane and is unimpressed by the design. "There's no way that thing is going to fly" he says. The maker of the paper airplane is offended by the substitute's comment and proceeds to throw the paper airplane across the room in an attempt to prove the substitute wrong. It had a solid flight. Other students want to challenge him so more people begin building paper airplanes.

Ten minutes later, there are now 30 paper airplanes in the room and they are being thrown around everywhere. People flip their desks to the ground for shelter as they are picking up landed paper airplanes and throwing them back. It's an all-out paper airplane war for 20 minutes and the substitute is even joins in. I connected on probably seven other people but got hit three times.

Memorization Nation

During my sophomore year, I took world history. At least that's what I think it was called. I don't remember what that class was over. For those who like when their teacher gives them everything they need to know before the exam, this is your class. She gives you the answer key to the exam the day before you take the exam and then you take the exam without using the answer key. So what is the incentive for paying attention in class if she is going to give you the

answer key? I never figured that part out. There was one day I was studying the answer key a few hours before the exam. My teacher saw me studying and then complimented me later in the day during class saying she likes that I was studying for the exam. She was the only teacher I ever had that complimented anyone for studying the day of the exam.

Exceptional Feedback On My Essays

Ever since second grade when I was promised that I'd be taught how to write in cursive, I was lied to in some way about learning writing. I take an English class during my junior year that is writing intensive. The best part is the feedback we get on our essays. The essays are graded on a score of 1-10. The teacher will not make any markings on our paper other than our grade. All we can do is take the grade we get and look at a grading rubric that has three sentences for each possible score explaining why we didn't score higher. For a score of three, it will say something like "A score of three indicates that the author did not write effectively. Their story is confusing and ambiguous. They did not use high-level vocabulary or enough literary devices." A score of ten says something like "The author performed an adequate job on their paper. The author communicated effectively and there is continuity in his or her writing." Oh, so in order to improve my writing, I need to write adequately. This is so simple! The best part is that if you go to ask the teacher for feedback and how to improve, she'll just read off that grading rubric word for word. This sounds like an effective way to improve your writing.

I also like it how you could make multiple mistakes and some of them might fit in multiple categories. How does she decide your score if you make some mistakes that are mentioned in score 8 but also mentioned in score 3? Just pick the lower one? How does she even rank which mistakes are worse than others? There is nothing here even taking into account the magnitude of how badly you messed up your mistake. You could use medium vocabulary but someone else might use more well-known vocabulary. Neither of them are "high-level" vocabulary. Do they both get the same score? What is high-level vocabulary anyway? Just words that not as many people know of? Who knows. Obviously no one learned anything from their essays. My next year English teacher can't be any worse at grading essays.

So I'm taking English the following year as a senior and I'm thinking that this teacher is going to be much better. I turn in my first essay and get it back about two weeks later. There are no markings on it. There's not even a grade on it. I guess I can't talk down on my previous teacher as much since she actually took the time to write out our grade on our paper. She must have been working way too hard. This senior English teacher will just give you your essays back two weeks later with no markings and just not remember anything if you ask her what she thought of your writing. Now you know why the writing you are reading on this collection of stories is written in the quality that it is.

Farmville Fam

When I was taking sophomore English, the teacher I had played favorites. If she liked you, you were guaranteed to get a good grade. I didn't usually kiss-up to my teachers a lot but I had to do what needed to be done in order to score well in her class. She loved me too. Every time I turned in my essay she will say something like "that looks like a perfect A." I would always say good morning to her at the start of class and ask her how her day was. I'll say stuff like "I'm so glad I signed up to take English with the best teacher in the world." I had to take it a step higher though. I decided to add her on Facebook. She accepted my friend request. It turned out she plays Farmville a lot. It's an app on Facebook where you have your own farm, you can plant stuff, water stuff, and harvest stuff. You can have friends on the game and go to any of your friends' farm to help out. I became friends with her on Farmville and helped out on her farm every day. Every day before I went to sleep, I would check on her farm and make sure that everything was looking good. She helped out on my farm too. I ended up scoring very high in her class despite English being one of my worst subjects.

Patriotic American Chemistry Teacher

Sophomore chemistry was interesting. Our teacher left in the middle of the semester and we never quite got a permanent replacement for her. We would get a teacher who is supposedly a permanent replacement and then the following month that person would get fired or relocated somewhere else. We had this one teacher who I'll refer to as the patriotic American chemistry teacher. This guy had an interesting personality. One day, it was his birthday so we started

singing him happy birthday and he yells "shut up!" in the middle of it so we quit singing. Nothing will top what he did on another day, though.

He starts telling a story about how he used to be in the United States military and how much he loves our country and honors the flag he fought for. Ten minutes later, a wasp flies into the classroom. He starts looking for something to use to swat the wasp. Out of all things, he grabs the American flag in the classroom. He keeps swinging the flag at the wasp and keeps missing. The wasp was flying all around the room. At this point, the flag has hit the ground at least 5 times and hit the wall probably 10 times. He never even killed the wasp. It just flew back out later on. What a patriot.

Failed Pre-calculus Extra Credit Attempt

I'm taking pre-calculus as a junior. We have an exam and the grades are very poor so our teacher lets us come in the next morning for an extra credit opportunity. I have to do some algebra to prove that the left side of the equation is equal to the right side of the equation. I know how to do the problem but it takes over 20 steps and we only get five minutes to do it. I end up working it out and I'm very confident that my answer is right. I turn it in to my teacher and she takes a look at it. She takes my paper, holds it one inch away from my face, tears it in half, and says "you missed a step." I asked what was wrong and she said that when doing my algebra, I didn't show division. Instead of showing both sides being divided, I showed them being

multiplied by the reciprocal...which is the same thing. She didn't accept it, though. The good news was that she let me try again the next morning. Sure enough, I did it the way she wanted and got my extra credit.

The Unexpected Math Villain

I'm taking algebra 2 as a sophomore. Most people in my class are struggling. Every math class has people struggling so this is no surprise. We take this exam and I have no idea what's going on. I guessed on more than half of the questions. I think I'll probably get a 50 on it. A few days later, our teacher is about to pass our exams back. She tells us that the exam grades were absolutely horrible. "Almost everyone got lower than a 50 and there was only one person who made a decent score" she tells us. She is passing the exams back and everyone is mourning over their grades. My classmates are trying to figure out who was the one person who actually scored well. Most of the exams have been handed back and there still hasn't been a passing grade. My exam ends up being one of the last exams to be handed back. I'm not feeling confident. I take a peek at my exam grade and it's in triple digits. 117. I immediately turn my exam back over and try to keep a poker face. It didn't work. Everyone started looking at me and got angry. I guess they shouldn't have signed up for a math class with me.

Taking AP Chemistry For An Elective

Not many people would take AP Chemistry for an elective credit. I'm not the most passionate about chemistry either but I decide to take it because of the teacher teaching it. The lowest grade anyone made in AP Chemistry the year before was a 97. There is almost no work in this class and you are guaranteed a high grade on assignments, even if you have no idea what you're doing. The teacher was the coolest person ever, despite no one learning anything. He will intentionally make a mistake when lecturing in class to see if anyone picks up on it and we just pretend like it's correct. He'll stop and say "did I make a mistake?" and we'll just say "nope, you're good!" The funny part is sometimes he'll intentionally make it extremely obvious and we will still pretend like he is correct.

The most interesting part of the class was the labs. We had that one person in our lab group who always wants to go above and beyond and come up with their own lab experiments. This sometimes causes some interesting chemical reactions. He was doing his own lab one day and the teacher sees what is going on and yells "it's about to blow!" The whole class leaped over desks and turtled in the corner of the room but nothing blew up. Five minutes later, someone else's lab blew up. The funny part was that the team whose lab blew up was actually following the rules (or trying to...).

The teacher also had the most interesting philosophies with his exams. You are allowed to take the exam in a group of up to 10. You are each allowed to ask him for help on two different questions of the exam and he will give you the answer. All our group ever did was just plan which questions which person would ask and then ask in a random order.

Phenomenal AP Exam Pass Rates

My high school had phenomenal AP Exam pass rates. By phenomenal, I mean phenomenal in that it was phenomenal how low our pass rates were compared to other schools. With over 2,000 students in our high school, we will have 0 people pass the AP Physics exam, 0 people pass the AP Chemistry exam, 0 people pass the AP Government exam, and 0 people pass the AP Economics exam almost every year. If anyone ever passed those exams (I don't know of anyone who did), it was only because they went well above to self-study. If someone can pass those exams with our teachers, then they can for sure pass those exams with no teachers (because they pretty much just did). For whatever reason, teachers at my school were evaluated by the school district based on how many people signed up for the AP exams. It wasn't about the pass rate. It was about the amount of students who signed up for it.

Teachers would try so hard to get people to sign up for AP Exams, even if they knew none of their students have any chance of passing it. Most of them would say something like "You don't have to take my final if you sign up for the AP Exam!" or "You'll get a free 100 on my final if you take the AP Exam!" Some of the AP exams that 0 students from our school passed was the result of not having a "teacher" and some were the result of not having a teacher. Why was one of those words in quotes and the other not? Well the AP Exams that corresponded

to a class that we didn't have a teacher (no quotes) for were those AP courses that were not offered at our school. No AP Engineering or AP Computer Science here.

US History

This class may not have had as many chaotic moments as it did in college but it certainly wasn't far off. I took this class during 7th period which was the last class of the day and was full of trouble makers. There was one hall pass for people to grab when taking bathroom breaks but most people would just use it to take a 20-minute walk. My teacher would kick students out of the class all the time. She never punished them, though. She would let them go home without having detention. Some students would try to get kicked out of class on purpose so that they could go home. I remember this one day, my teacher was in a really bad mood and half of the class was misbehaving. She kicks this one guy out of class and yells "Does anyone else want to leave too? You can go home right now!" Right after she yells that out, one guy gets up and walks out. She is now even angrier. She turns her back to write something on the board and five more people get up and walk out as her back is turned. The class slowly got smaller throughout the rest of the day and she ended up not caring anymore after the 10th person or so left.

Asinine Analytical Analysis

We had to memorize around 200 literary devices during junior English. For half of our assignments, we would have to take stories written by famous authors and analyze it for literary devices. There was always a certain amount of literary devices our teacher was wanting us to have. The hardest part was that everything was subjective. You could strongly interpret a sentence as foreshadowing but the teacher might have a different interpretation and therefore your interpretation is wrong. The worst part of memorizing what the literary devices meant was that most of the literary devices were named in such a way such that the name has nothing to do with the meaning of the literary device. The red herring literary device has nothing to do with fish. The slippery slope literary device has nothing to do with a slope. Nothing was cut and clear. Not even the literary device called “long sentence” was cut and clear. How many words in a sentence are needed for the sentence to qualify as a long sentence? Or does it just mean that the sentence is long in comparison to other sentences in the piece? We weren’t given a specific number and the teacher refused to explain it. There were also the literary devices “medium sentence” and “short sentence.” I used these to get to the amount of literary devices she wanted since every sentence fits in one of the three categories.

Pro JV Tennis Player

Our junior varsity tennis team is playing another junior varsity high school tennis team and our coach decides to troll the other team. The name of one of our players is called, signaling

that it is his turn to walk onto the tennis court and play against the opponent of the other school. My coach thought it would be funny to step onto the court, pretending to be the guy from our school playing. Our coach was new and young and looked just like a high school student anyway. Our coach steps on the court and proceeds to warm up with the kid from the other school. The opponent was completely fooled and had no idea that the guy on the other side of the net was our tennis coach instead of his actual opponent. Our coach was hitting the ball over 90 mph in warm up and the guy was freaking out that his opponent was so good for a junior varsity tennis player. After about five minutes, our coach told him that he is the coach and not actually his opponent and the guy who was fooled couldn't stop laughing.

Angry Tennis Substitute

It is time for 7th period tennis and we have a substitute running the class today. We are supposed to be picked up by our tennis coach in 20 minutes on the school bus to take us to our tennis match at another high school. Our substitute teacher didn't get the memo. She wants us to go to the weight room and lift weights. We tried to explain to her that we have a tennis match against another high school starting soon and that our coach is coming to pick us up. She didn't believe us. We obviously don't want to lift weights right before our tennis match so we don't want to go to the weight room right now. She yells "everyone follow me to the gym now!" She turns around and starts walking to the gym. No one is following her. She walks back to our class by the tennis courts, yelling at us for not following her. She then sarcastically yells "if you guys

don't want to go work out, then we can go to the library and learn how to work out!" A guy on our team immediately replies "library!" She is now even angrier. She turns to walk to the library, expecting us to follow. For whatever reason, she again doesn't turn around to see if anyone is following her until two minutes later. Again, no one is following her. She comes back and then tells us that if no one follows her this time, she is going to complain to the principal. She turns around and starts walking to the library and no one is following her. Three minutes later, our tennis coach arrives with the school bus and we get out of there before the substitute returns.

Touring High Schools

When we had tennis matches at other high schools, I always toured the high school. I never found a high school that looked worse than mine. Some of the high schools had football fields with bleachers that go up hundreds of feet. Our football field has five rows of bleachers. These schools would have freshman wings that are bigger than our whole school. Only once did touring a high school go wrong. Our coach parked the bus at the high school and said that in 45 minutes, she will take us to a different high school since our playing destination was going to change. I decided to tour the high school with my friend. We kept track of time and made it back after 25 minutes. By then, our coach already left with the bus. Oh well. I guess a ghost can play in my spot. We decided to walk to the bleachers and watch the tennis matches from there. Eventually, our coach came back to get us.

Confusing our Doubles Opponents In Tennis

I played a lot of doubles with my brother in high school and we liked to confuse our opponents. Our opponents would see that we have the same last name and that we look alike so they would always wonder if we are twins or at least brothers. We will usually first get asked if we are brothers and we will say yes. After that, we'll get asked if we are twins and we will say no. Then, we'll get asked what grade we are in and we'll say that we are in the same grade. Our opponents will always be so confused. "So you guys are in the same grade, you guys are brothers, but you are not twins?" "Yep!" Ok now they are probably wondering who failed out of school for a year. Nope, neither of us failed. Ah. Same grade different age. Nope we are the same age. At this point in time, our opponents try to come up with something clever thinking we were born 11 months apart and happen to be born right at the cut-off for the date that determines when they start school. On top of that, right now happens to be the one month that we are the same age. Nope. Our opponents can never figure it out and we shoot down all of our ideas unless they happen to guess the situation correctly. No one has ever guessed correctly against us. We leave them confused during the whole tennis match to play mind tricks on them and then we tell them the situation when the match is over. We are triplets.

Hotel Party On A Tennis Trip

We are out of town for the weekend at a high school tennis tournament. Our team stayed in a hotel for two nights. During one of the nights, some people of our tennis team decided to have a party with people of the other tennis team. The problem is, our tennis coach checks everyone's room at 11 pm to make sure everyone is in their room. Our tennis coach is going to one of our team's rooms at 11 pm and knocks on the door. There is probably around 15 people in the room but she doesn't know that. At this point in time, our teammates need to hide the people from the other tennis team. However, they need a stall tactic since our coach wants them to open the door right now. One of our teammates yells out saying that his teammate is changing so he can't open up the door until he is finished changing. They quickly stuff all of the people from the other team into the bathroom. After that, they hang up all of the artwork that had fallen off the wall. They turn on the TV to Who Wants To Be a Millionaire and then let our coach in. Our teammates in the room pretend to be following the show and start talking about the question and making guesses. Our coach only sees our four teammates and they are peacefully watching TV so she leaves and goes to check other rooms. Mission success.

Benchwarmers Reloaded

High school tennis tournaments in the fall can be tiring at times since each school plays against four other schools in two days. This means that each person has to play 8 matches since

they'll play one doubles and one singles match per school they play against. In high school tennis, there are 19 matches played between two teams, which means that your school has to win ten matches in order to beat the other team. If your team still has other matches going on when reaching your tenth win, the rest of the players can be pulled off the court without needing all 19 matches to be completed. One day, our team decided to put this to use.

We were playing against our last school of the weekend so this is everyone's 7th and 8th match. Everyone from our school and our opponent's school is tired. We end up winning all of the doubles and the mixed doubles, giving us a 7-0 lead. All 12 of the singles matches are being played now and we just need to win 3 of them and then the rest of the matches can be pulled off the court. The doubles matchups were very one-sided so we are feeling confident in our singles. Here is where the fun begins. A couple people from our team decide that they likely don't need to finish their match since our team can have other matches win and then their own match will just be pulled off the court when we reach 10 wins. After being called in to play, they can just stay sitting down on court and wait until the other matches finish. They talk over this idea with their opponents and their opponents agree since they are all so tired. So now we have 6 singles matches on court where both our players and opponents are sitting on the bench socializing. All of the spectators that came to watch are now watching people on court who are sitting on the bench when they look to the north side from their seat. To the south side, everyone is going all out and trying to win. We win the first three completed matches on the south side and then everyone from both teams gets to go home.

Notable Notes

-I took a psychology class during 1st period and the teacher's son was a student of the class. His son showed up late every day.

-A guy got an award for perfect attendance one year. He was absent the day he won that award.

-Everyone in our school hated standardized tests that we had to take. This one guy tried to avoid having to take a standardized test by requesting that his teacher send him to ISS (in-school suspension). His teacher approved his request and wrote him up a note for going to ISS. The student starts walking to the building for ISS. Ten minutes later, he returns to our classroom and tells the teacher that they wouldn't take him.

-We had a high school tennis tournament where they allowed me to play doubles with a tennis player from a different high school. Unfortunately, our wins didn't give us points towards either of our schools. However, our wins negated points from being earned by the schools of our opponents. We won three straight matches before being defeated. We did not play against either of our schools.

-Some players on our tennis team enrolled in 7th period tennis but refused to show up for class. They would just go home. The coach would threaten to give them a 0 for the day if they went home and they'd still leave. At the end of the grading period, the coach lost the grade book and everyone got a 100.

-A player who wanted to play on our tennis team decided that he didn't want to try out. He skips try outs and the coach says that he isn't going to be allowed on the team. The next day, he was placed on varsity.