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Year 9 English
Mr. Hill
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"IB Learner Profile"
By Kevin Liu

CHARACTERS

MITCHELL, 16: Year 10 student at UCC

AUSTIN, 16: Year 10 student at UCC

TIME

Friday at Noon. Midst a busy week in February.

PLACE

Upper Canada College, Lower Dining Hall lunch line. Students fill the dining hall, lining up for the burgers being sold today. The line stretches almost to the staircase opposite the dining hall.

Scene 1: Line

MITCHELL stands in the very back of the line for the LD, looking at his phone. AUSTIN walks in and stands behind him.

MITCHELL
What's up, my man? Feeling principled? Reflective?

AUSTIN
Not really actually. More of a risk-taker. They're almost certainly going to run out of burgers before we get ours.

MITCHELL and AUSTIN wait for 10 minutes. The line doesn't seem to get any shorter.

AUSTIN

I'm going up to the library. I still got my bibliography and 3500-word reflection to work on for my physics paper, and it's due 4th period.

MITCHELL
You know what? Same. The reflection worth three whole criteria, so we'd better get it done.

AUSTIN and MITCHELL push through the crowd and walk back upstairs.

Scene 2: Library

AUSTIN and MITCHELL occupy a set of desks at the back of the library. Around them are Year 11s flipping through entire sets of reference books and Year 9s playing League of Legends with their 80-dollar gaming mice.

AUSTIN
Hey Mitchell, it's supposed to be Chicago style, right?

MITCHELL
Yeah, but make sure you do the correct capitalization for the author name and publisher. You wouldn't want a bad mark in Criterion D, would you?

AUSTIN keeps hammering away at his keyboard. MITCHELL stares at his screen and checks the word count every 15 seconds. 30 minutes pass.

MITCHELL
Ok, I'm finally done. 3560 words of reflection and 42 pages of citations. I double-checked all of the command terms, don't worry.

AUSTIN
How long is your actual paper?

MITCHELL
It's around 800 words. I'm gonna go print it out. I'll be back.

Scene 3: Printer

MITCHELL is in the student center, punching at the printer screen.

AUSTIN approaches, with a confused look on his face.

MITCHELL
Stupid printer never works. It's always out of magenta ink, which is necessary for my black and white paper apparently.

AUSTIN opens the printer.
Looks like another student's 55-page bibliography jammed up the printer. Let me just pull it out.

MITCHELL
Are you sure?

AUSTIN
Meh. I've done it before anyways.

AUSTIN yanks out a sheet of paper. The printer spits out a sheet of paper, with a black line through the middle.

MITCHELL
Well I've got my cover page now, just 49 pages to go.

AUSTIN and MITCHELL watch helplessly as the printer prints 49 blank sheets of paper.

MITCHELL
Oh, forget it. I'll figure something out.

MITCHELL winks at AUSTIN.

Scene 4: Forbidden

MITCHELL tiptoes into the teacher printer room.

MITCHELL (whispering to himself)
Login ID.... One... zero... six... seven... two... five...

MITCHELL
Damn. That was fast. What on...

MITCHELL
What the heck? Now printing 'The complete list of International Baccalaureate Command Terms and Criteria'??? Around 73000 pages???

MITCHELL's words are muffled by the paper shooting out of the staff printer. The entire room fills with paper.

MITCHELL (shouting)
Help! Help!

But he could not be heard.

The ceiling has been pushed up and broken by the paper from the printer. The tower of paper breaks through the roof of the Upper School. Minutes later, the tower stops rising and comes to rest, with MITCHELL at the very top. The only thing higher than the mound of paper is the clock tower itself.

The school declares that due to these circumstances, the rest of the day will be under a modified schedule and that third period will begin ten minutes later than planned at 1:20 pm.

Scene 5: Hospital

MITCHELL is lying on a hospital bed. He rises slowly. A DOCTOR enters.

DOCTOR
Good morning Mitchell. You've been in a coma for sixteen months, since the printer incident.

MITCHELL
Oh boy. I can't wait to talk to my friends again.

MITCHELL picks up his phone. The year is 2021. His friends are all too busy with their extended essay footnotes. He has nothing but 482 overdue notices from the library and 212 CAS project reminders on ManageBac.

MITCHELL
What...

MITCHELL falls right back into a coma.

End.

Reflection

When writing this comedic play/dialogue, I utilized many of the conventions and techniques I learned in class in order to enhance the effect of my writing.

On the big picture, my whole piece was contrived according to the basic structure of a universally-accepted joke, with a set-up, build-up and a sort of punch line. The first two scenes built up the backstory behind the events: Mitchell was in a hurry to print his assignment, and the third scene built up the pressure when Mitchell discovered that the student printer did not work. Finally, the "punch line" of the whole joke was that the faculty printer was able to print at tremendous speeds.

My story also fit the "formula" for slapstick comedy: taking some rather mundane task, adding an unpredictable twist or problem, and finally attempting to solve it in a rather unorthodox way.

In order to enhance the comedic effect of the story, I also used a number of other techniques. For example, cultural stereotyping is a technique that is used in different genres of comedy, mocking the prevalent culture and traditions of that time. For example, the sensational TV show Mr. Bean mocks the Britishness of the character, and Molière's *The Pretentious Young Ladies* makes fun of, to some degree, the incredibly well-mannered behavior of upper-class Parisian girls at that time.

In my script, I stereotyped and poked fun at some of the mysterious and quirky traits of the International Baccalaureate, a major contributing factor to the culture at UCC. For example, Mitchell's assignment was subject to a rather lengthy bibliography and reflection section, which was worth "three whole criteria", whatever that means in the IB. The mound of paper being printed by the faculty printer was, in fact, the complete list of IB command terms, poking fun at the fact that assignments in the IB are often filled with a wide array of these terms.

In addition to referencing the many "extremes" of the IB, I also comically exaggerated many real-life situations throughout the story. For example, in the library, Year 11s are

frantically flipping through entire sets of reference books, a scene that makes fun of how busy and stressed students in Year 11 tend to be.

While writing my script, I encountered the majority of my challenges at the beginning. At first, I started aimlessly writing a script without a basic structure in mind. I soon realized that my script would have no purpose and no arrival at a punchline. After I streamlined the storyline for my script, I found it was a lot easier. Another technique that helped me was to write out the plot first without really worrying about how funny it is, and then add more jokes, ironic situations, and etc. afterwards.

The process of writing my own dialogue was facilitated by the work I had done with similar mediums in class. I found that reading them aloud or listening to the class read it and following along helped deepen my understanding of the material. A lot of the material we covered was written for the oral form, and being able to appreciate some of the jokes spoken orally did help me to realize the effect of the various techniques being used. In fact, while writing this script I also read it aloud to help me appraise its impacts on the reader.

My choice to write a script also presented me with some interesting opportunities. Most importantly, I was able to present the story in a different angle. Instead of writing it like a typical story, I could employ a narrator and the two characters and look at everything in the third person. Doing a dialogue as such also allowed me to focus more on the interaction and reaction of the two characters, rather than the events themselves.

At the end, I was rather satisfied with my writing, and I thoroughly enjoyed the challenge of introducing myself to this new genre.