



## What Comes Next For the Class of 2020?

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

It is a surreal time of year for the Class of 2020. Last Friday, seniors departed Marblehead High School having completed their last-ever high school midterm. In doing so, they also faced a new reality: grades don't matter anymore.

Of course, AP classes are as important as ever, and impressive scores on the exams typically offer coveted college credits. But for the senior class, no future grades will be factored into GPAs, nor will they be sent to colleges until after students have been accepted.

For all intents and purposes, high school as we know it is over.

Such a realization, naturally, generates excitement and relief. I cannot count how many times I have stayed up until night dwindles away into dawn, burning eyes scanning pages of notes in preparation for an upcoming exam. The inevitable anxiety I have always associated with test-taking can now, technically, dissipate. After all, what is there to worry about?

And yet, I worry. Because change, no matter what form it assumes, begets uncertainty. For all my life, I knew what came next. Elementary school blended seamlessly into middle, then middle into high. The rungs of my childhood ladder were nailed into place long before I began to climb. My days were structured: go to school, finish after-school activities, do homework, repeat.

Learn. Prepare, prepare, prepare. Life was a whirlwind of preparation for what came next.

Now, we have reached that "next." Many seniors have already been accepted to college, and almost all have submitted every one of their applications. Applications are in, grades are in, so what is next?

Any senior who tells you that he or she knows is lying. Yes, many of us have a general understanding of our career aspirations, of what we hope to make of our lives. But really, what do we know? We are young, so incredibly young, and naive. It is a big world out there, and we have hardly experienced any of it. Now is the time when we begin to explore, when we leave the shelter of a planned life, when our ability to manage our own lives will be tested for the first time.

There is still half a year of high school left. We have not attended prom, nor walked the stage at graduation. We are still high schoolers. But we are reaching the end of the ladder. Our next step is no longer predetermined; we have a world of options from which to choose, and we have no idea which is the best one.

Where will I be happy next year? Where is it best to apply? Can I get in here?

We do not know.

Is that too much money? How do I fill up the car with gas? Is this how you write a check?

We do not know.

What should I wear for my interview? When do you know if it is appropriate to address someone by first name in an email? How am I supposed to go to the dentist by myself?

We do not know.

But we are learning. Our conventional grades are unchangeable. Now, we get real grades. Now, positive and negative evaluations do not result in GPA bumps or drops, but rather indicate the quality of the recommendations we will receive, the jobs we will get, and the colleges to which we will be accepted. The stakes have just soared, and we had better catch up with them.

So, for the Class of 2020, the experience of high school has changed for good. Any relief we may feel after the completion of first semester is negated by our uncertainty about the world looming ahead of us: a world of mistakes, of hardship, and of tests harder than any we've been given before. But I am optimistic. Because that world is also one of growth, of strength, of evolution, and of learning, learning, learning. Because that ladder was predictable and reliable, but it was also constricting, dictating every step we took.

Because the Class of 2020 is learning how to fill out checks, pay for gas, apply to college, and leave the ladder behind, and because we are ready for what comes next.

## Ms. Geary, Train Survivor, Retires

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If you've had Ms. Geary as a teacher, you likely know the stories about how she was hit by a train, poisoned, strangled, and tazed (although not all at once). Even if you haven't stepped foot in the room where she teaches, these stories float around school and have earned Ms. Geary the status of an MHS legend. Now, after 22 years of teaching, Joan Geary prepares to say goodbye when she retires this Friday, January 31.

Reflecting on her teaching career and the lessons she has learned throughout her time at MHS, Ms. Geary consistently comes back to one thing: the students. Over the past 15 years at Marblehead High School, Ms. Geary has taught chemistry to hundreds of kids, and has always felt eager to help her students learn potentially confusing chemistry concepts by uncomplicating the lessons. One of her favorite labs she performs with her students every year is an aluminum foil and copper chloride reaction, which demonstrates "a ton of chemistry concepts in a tiny beaker," such as the four pieces of evidence of a chemical reaction. After 15 years of labs like this, which often require the use of a hot plate and potentially emit smoke, Ms. Geary is proud to hold the record among the chemistry teachers for causing the least fire evacuations (zero!).

This clean safety record is impressive, but Ms. Geary's legacy extends far beyond her individual achievements. What distinguishes Ms. Geary from other teachers is the learning environment she facilitates, one based upon mutual respect between herself and her students. Ms. Geary accepts her students for who they are, and together they bond over

er conversations about what interests the students, both in chemistry and beyond, always devoting at least a few minutes at the beginning of class to discuss last night's game. In 2011, when the Bruins won the Stanley Cup, she and her classes followed the team's progress, and when they finally won, it was a shared victory between the Bruins, MHS, and Ms. Geary. As a life-long fan, Ms. Geary had waited for this win her entire life, and celebrating the victory with her students was one of the highlights of her time at MHS. It is experiences like this that Ms. Geary insists have built within her a "sense of community from the kids," even though she is not a Marblehead resident. Ms. Geary comes to root for the school teams and watch the school performances, because as she says, these experiences, "Let me see another side of [the students and] see a different person on the court or the stage or the ice." Everytime she wears red and black, she thinks of Marblehead. The school has left an impression on Ms. Geary, and Ms. Geary has certainly made an impression on her students.

Yet in two years, when the Class of 2022 graduates, no more MHS students will have had Ms. Geary as their teacher. This thought is still sinking in for Ms. Geary, especially as she anticipates the prom red carpet, an event she annually attends in order to see yet another side of her students. In two years, she will no longer know the kids who are heading to prom. They will no longer know her. And yet in a sense, we all know Ms. Geary. She's the kind of teacher we've all had, or at least have always wanted—the kind whose presence is so comforting that when you enter her classroom on a bad day, your mood immediately improves. She is kind-hearted, and makes jokes with her students, and she believes in them day in and day out. She says that every single day of her teaching career, she has learned something from these students, and every day she comes to work, she laughs, a habit that she insists is rare for many working adults. So no, Ms. Geary has not been abducted by aliens, no matter what you've heard. However, she has stolen the hearts of MHS, and we'll miss her very much. Thank you, Ms. Geary, for your contribution to the students of Marblehead High School—you've certainly made our lives better.

## Memes of the 2010s

Sean McLean, Junior  
REPORTER

Over the course of the last decade, memes grew and evolved into what they are today. Many changes happened: many memes rose to the height of popularity then plummeted into the realm of cringe. The 2010s had many memes which defined each year, such as in 2010 itself when the most popular memes were what are known as rage comics. After that, in 2011, while memes had not changed much, some new ones grew in popularity. One such meme was the Nyan Cat, which was a video of a pixel cat with a Pop-Tart body with a rainbow trailing behind it while flying through space, accompanied by an obnoxiously catchy song.



In 2012, there were many new popular memes, such as the condescending Willy Wonka meme, or the Overly Attached Girlfriend meme, which were pictures with captions of the same joke over and over just in slightly different forms—this format lasted for a while. In 2013, a meme which has made a lasting and memorable impact was born: doge. Doge referred to a picture of a Shiba Inu, which featured words like "wow," "such," "many," and "so" used in intentionally grammatically-incorrect forms.

In 2014, memes took on a new form, and Vine became massively popular and caused many people to start their careers in entertainment. 2015 was home to the MLG meme,

illuminati meme, John Cena meme, and many more. 2016 featured many new memes like the Arthur's Fist meme, which was a picture of the titular character of the show *Arthur* clenching his fist. Another massively popular meme in 2016 was about a deceased gorilla named Harambe—this meme would change the course of memes forever.

In 2017, fidget spinners became a popular meme. Fidget spinners are devices designed to help people with anxiety to focus. 2018 housed memes very similar in structure to the ones still popular today. One such meme was the Ugandan Knuckles meme, which was born in VRChat when someone using an avatar of a deformed version of the character Knuckles from the *Sonic the Hedgehog* games used a false Ugandan accent to say "Do you know the way?" Another meme of 2018 was the Big Chungus meme, which

featured a frame from a 1941 Merrie Melodies cartoon in which the character Bugs Bunny was mocking the character Elmer Fudd by transforming into a chubbier version of himself.

2019 housed a variety of memes which all shared great popularity. Many memes quickly rose in popularity and then plummeted at the same rate. Some of the more memorable memes of 2019 included memes about the character Thanos, who was prominently featured in *Avengers: Infinity War* and *Avengers: Endgame*, as well as the CEO of Tesla, Elon Musk. The doge meme also resurfaced. The 2010s created a lasting legacy of memes, and the meme awarded "meme of the decade" was the doge meme. The 2010s could arguably be defined by memes, as they have essentially become a universal language of the internet, bringing fame and laughter to so many and shaping a substantial part of today's culture.

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