

Advice from English Majors to New Students

Students who participated in the 2019 English major Mentor and Mentee program were asked, "Write a note of advice to a new student starting the fall semester. What should they do to be successful and have fun, and what should they avoid?" The following are the students' answers.

It's OK to Be Afraid!

First and foremost, not only is it okay to be scared—it's okay to be terrified! Speaking as a freshman who was absolutely terrified in my first semester, I can promise you that this fear will fade as you become more comfortable with your surroundings—new town, new school, new people! Classes can be overwhelming, but once you find a good rhythm, you can figure even the most impossible things out.

If you feel homesick, don't be afraid to talk to your friends about home; they really miss it too! Call home and tell them about your day, classes, or anything you want. Keeping in touch with home helps you realize that WKU isn't replacing your home and your family. When people say it's going to be like a home away from home, that doesn't mean you have to forget about your real home!

As scary as everything and everyone might be, get involved! Don't push yourself too far past your boundaries (make sure to set those), but it's going to be great when you find your friends, your passions, and everything. Socialize, STUDY, SLEEP! B R E A T H

Try New Things!

- Look around for some extracurricular activities like clubs. These will help you integrate into college life, help you make friends, and give you something to do if or when you have downtime. It never hurts to try English Club, History Club, intramural sports, or campus ministries. You never know who you might meet and where you might feel at home. You aren't limited to clubs that are in your major, so check out as many as you want. But, don't overcommit yourself to clubs and activities; you need to sleep, study, and just hang out doing nothing, too.
- Be sure to exchange numbers with people in your English classes. You will likely see them in future English classes, and it's great to have friends who share your interests. Don't be afraid to talk to the stranger next to you; they feel just as awkward about it as you do.
- I recommend forming study groups. During my time at WKU, I've found that study groups helped me find motivation to study and find a group of friends within my class. It made the class experience more enjoyable and introduced me to some of my closest friends. It also motivates you to take the first step in studying and meeting new people.

Stress Happens! There are Resources to Help

Everyone feels overwhelmed at least sometimes. Just know that you aren't alone although it might feel that way the first semester. There are lots of resources here for you, and you're paying

to go here, so use them. There are people everywhere who can help you find those resources: RAs, professors, friends, etc.

Here are some things you can do to manage stress

- Take a break (All-nighters are not a good idea, and you'll only end up falling asleep on a desk. Get good sleep, you nerd)
- Go on walks and appreciate the nice weather (Invest in a hammock; you'll see them everywhere on campus on sunny days)
- Make sure to eat (tasty and nutritious food!)
- Do something fun like picnics and movie nights

At the end of the day, remember that we're all human here, so ask for help when you need it.

Advice I Wish I'd Gotten

- If you haven't already, please get yourself a planner
- Also, get yourself a water bottle (and use it)
- Try out a few clubs and don't get discouraged if some of them don't fit you
- It's okay to go to bed early
- Side note, might be important: Wi-Fi signal is worst around 7-8 pm
- Also, the syllabi are a lot scarier than the professors themselves

Other Tips for Success

- Write down submission deadlines as soon as they come up and submit to as many as you have time for.
 - It looks great on a resume and experience doesn't hurt! If you don't want to, that's okay. Just keep an eye out and you'll know what you can do for the future.
- Don't be afraid to meet with your professors. They want you to succeed!
 - They can help you understand the classwork more, and they can tell you about opportunities in the department. Plus, having those connections gives you options when you need references.
- If you're in Honors, take ENG 202, the Honors Forum.
 - We only meet once a week, but we learn a lot about the English Department, work opportunities, and various literature not often discussed in regular courses.
- Avoid excessive partying...or on the flip side, isolation.
 - It is always great to talk, even if you are introverted. People are willing to work with you about that sort of thing.
- Avoid procrastination at all costs.
 - Set aside an hour or so every day to just do homework that's due down the line.

Most importantly, don't overthink things! Be confident in your abilities as a student!