

Dear incoming AP Art students,

Congrats on getting into AP Art!! I remember after a few weeks of creating a portfolio to skip advanced art to get into AP Art, I spent 2 months meandering around the art wing after school and walking away out of the sheer fear of my art being perceived ... and also my fear of Ms. King. I was so scared that I forced my friend to physically push me into the classroom, and after clawing at the walls and stepping into the classroom, I took my art out and walked out a new AP Art student. From my internal battle to even advocate for myself to be in the class, I learned to never doubt your worthiness to be in AP Art. Everyone is at a different level—but you are not expected to be a professional, you are just expected to try. AP Art is not a class of consistent perfection— it is challenging and a struggle and that is normal. Trust Ms. King. You belong in the class.

When it comes to the actual class experience, the first year is the hardest. Bootcamp was a teensy tiny bit traumatizing because it forces you to break out of your comfort zone at a rapid pace, but the suffering makes your life so much easier when you actually do your portfolio. Before bootcamp, I HATED acrylic paint to my core, and I could only comfortably color in watercolor and digitally. Now, acrylic paint is my favorite medium, and I learned to like gouache (though it's been a tough, violent battle). I was so used to a leisurely pace to perfect all of my art that bootcamp stressed me out because I could not keep up, so my biggest tip is to focus on experimentation and finishing the work, not perfection. For your sustained investigation, Despite all the TikTok AP Art portfolios, your AP portfolio doesn't have to explore super deep, personal, angsty topics to do well. Just draw what you enjoy and are passionate about because you'll be doing that for at least a year! The second year is so much more chill since you skip bootcamp and just continue your portfolio, and you already know what to do.

Outside of the art, people (including myself) get super super comfortable in this classroom so just keep in mind, you can hear most conversations in this room and I have heard many many many many things I was definitely NOT supposed to hear. Take that as you will! If you need a reason to keep hanging on we have business meetings every month where we have super professional and serious discussions about super serious business (with food!!!!)

Workwise, I have mastered the art of procrastination to the extent in which one can master it (not too much). Don't master it. At the end of the day, more time creates more finished and well-thought out work that the all nighters and celsius drinks and 4 coffees cannot duplicate as often. Just because you made a banger piece one all

nighter doesn't mean you can do that forever. First year of AP, I ended up doing weekly all nighters for each piece because putting way too much on my plate in other aspects of my life did not help my procrastination at all. Even though I learned to paint quicker in these deathly cram sessions, I have only done two proper all nighters this year because I feel physically unable to anymore– which was odd because I've been doing all nighters for like forever. As a warning, you can physically wear yourself out so don't depend on all nighters forever. The best thing to do is to avoid all nighters at all by not procrastinating. Try to tell yourself you'll work on a piece for at least an hour or even 30 minutes every day. Just try to work on it every day, even if it's a little bit. Having shows or songs that you associate with locking in is helpful too. I watched Tuca and Bertie and Bojack Horseman at least 5 times to its entirety last year because I started ONLY rewatching those shows while doing my work. This year, I listened to the exact same song on repeat for hours to keep me in the zone. Associating audio with focusing always worked for me.

Don't feel bad about making bad art. In AP, I've made the best pieces but I've also made the worst pieces I've ever made. You need to mess up to learn!! It doesn't make you a bad artist or unworthy to be in AP Art, it is just part of the process of growing. That aside, bad art is still hung up on critique whether you like it or not.

Also, if you don't wanna take your pieces seriously, don't. I just painted whatever I could think of and told myself I'd figure out the meaning later and I did! AP Art makes you a master at BS so don't worry too much.

Good Luck,
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Class of 2024