

Davenport FAQ Guide

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About

How does this doc works?

So the Davenport frocos (Andre, Clare, Connor, Ira, Nikki, Claire, Zaina, and Shuaib) originally put this together to help the Dport frosh, but then we thought it could help you navigate your transition to Yale too. Some notes about the doc:

1. You can't (and please don't) edit any of the information in this document. But, if you'd like a copy for yourself you can go to File->Make a Copy or you can click File-> Download As and save a copy directly to whatever text editor (word, pages, etc.) you use. Then will have your own version of this document that you can do anything you want with.
2. Throughout the doc you will see that for many questions multiple frocos answered multiple questions. We did this on purpose to give you a wide variety of viewpoints.
3. There is a lot of info in this doc. To make it easier to navigate we made a table of contents. All the sections in the table of contents are hyperlinked... when you click on them it will take you directly to that section of the document. There's also a "back to the top" link at the bottom of each section. Clicking on it will, surprisingly, take you back to the top of the document.
4. There's no one way to use this resource. You don't even have to use it at all. You can use it as a reference for questions you might have or you can read through it. Whatever floats your

boat.

5. Come back to this document later! You might find it really useful three weeks into September (or in mid-April!), when you have a giant burning question that you can't even fathom now.

8. Feel free to pass this document or share this document with other people who might find it useful. Whatever Yale related FB groups you're on. Really whatever. The more the merrier!

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Majors & Required Courses

What are these required classes, distributional credits, and skills credits?

What is the timeline?

Nikki: Here is a [helpful chart](#) that outlines distributional requirements.

Here is [another chart](#) that outlines language requirements.

[Here is what](#) Yale officially says in a lot of wordy detail.

Andre: Really, the only people I've ever seen sweat the distributional requirements are humanities majors trying to get their science credits (if that's going to be you, come talk to us: science for non-science is VERY hit-or-miss). For the most part, you need to be aware of these requirements, but fulfilling them is surprisingly easy.

Requirements are divided into two types. You may see classes listed under several or none of these categories, but each class can only fulfill one requirement (aka, your chemistry class is listed as both QR and Sc, but you can only count it as one of the two; that being said, you can count it as QR for your freshman year requirements but call it Sc when you graduate -- it seems somewhat confusing but it's not too bad).

Your area requirements are science (you know what that is), social sciences (think psychology, anthropology, and government), and humanities (art and history and literature). Classes will be listed with an Sc, So, or Hu after them on your bluebooking website if they can fulfill these requirements.

Your skill requirements are Quantitative Reasoning (think math), Writing (think English or History), and Foreign Languages (think Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphics).

By the time you graduate, you will need to have taken two of every area and skill, with the exception of foreign language: you need to complete L1-L3, L3 and L4, L4

and L5, or just L5 depending on your proficiency going in.

However, by the time you finish Freshman year, you need to have 1 credit in two skill categories.

To finish sophomore year, you need to be halfway done: one credit for each area requirement and for each skill requirement

To finish junior year, you need to have finished all skill requirements

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What are Yale's majors?

So you can find a list of all of Yale's majors [here](#). Some majors are not standalone, meaning you have to do them in combination with another major. Other majors require you to apply and be accepted into the major (EP&E, Global Affairs, Environmental Studies, etc.) If you're interested in one of those majors, it can be helpful to check out what they look for applicants early on and keep that in mind.

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Does Yale have minors?

Nikki: Yale does not offer minors. You can "concentrate" in something but there are no requirements for that and I don't think it's formally recognized. But if you take a lot of classes in an area of interest that does not coincide with your major, you're basically concentrating in it.

Some majors, however, allow/require you to concentrate officially in an area of interest.

But don't worry too much about figuring out your major and definitely not concentrating in anything. Just look at some things that interest you and consider taking the prereqs. Check things out and plan ahead, but don't be afraid to break those plans ...you are way too early in your Yale career to have to commit to something absolutely.

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Classes & Bluebooking

What's the difference between the online blue-book, OCS, and OCI?

Zaina: The online blue-book (ybb.yale.edu) helps you map out your courses in a really fun/interactive/colorful/dynamic way. You can see multiple pages at once. Basically, it is a really user-friendly application that some Yale students designed. So many Yale students used YBB in its launch year that [Yale later acquired](#) it. Most students use this to initially design and view their Yale classes because of its ease of use. OCS however, remains the way that you can/must officially register for classes -- you can access OCS through yale.edu/sis, with your NetID. Yale OCI is purely a shopping tool, aka browsing tool. You can also view course evaluations for a particular class or professor through any of the three interfaces.

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What is blue booking and how do I do that thing?

Nikki: Yalies call searching for classes “blue booking.” This probably doesn’t make much sense to you, but up until this year Yale used to mail out this sizeable blue book with all the course listings for the year. Blue booking can be overwhelming, especially your first go around. Here’s how I/ a lot of people go about it:

1. Don’t get overwhelmed. It’s easy to get overwhelmed with 2000+ courses to navigate but really you’ll get the hang of it.
2. Try and map out what you need to take or any prerequisites + distributional requirements you might need to knock out (there’s more detail about what you need to complete a majors + required courses section).

Each major + programs at Yale usually have some requirements. If you do a quick google search (major + yale + requirements) you should be able to find the requirements. It can also be super helpful to sort of map out what you need/are aiming to take year by year. I don’t think any of us would advise trying to knock out all your required credits in a year, but I would say try to get majority of them done in your first two years. Definitely spread them out. I made [this tracker](#) throughout my years here (modified for your class in case you want to use it too) to sort of visualize what I was taking.

Most importantly though, don’t stress about prereqs...just keep them in mind. Oh, and prereqs can also give you a good idea if the major will be a good fit so it might be wise to take one or two for some majors you’re thinking about.

3. Once you have mapped out what you think you want to take this semester, I would look for classes that fit the bill. Keep an open mind when you’re just searching and

definitely take note of things that aren't necessarily what you are looking for but sound super interesting. Make sure you have back-ups too. When you begin to piece your schedule together, you might not get into certain classes or taking certain classes may not be logistically possible. It's always good to have some back-ups.

4. Once you've found some options for any requirements/prereqs you're trying to fill, just look around for what seems interesting/fun. It also might be a good idea to think about your education holistically--are there things you really want to know about or professors you really want to take a class with? Your time at Yale literally goes by in the blink of an eye so it's good to have a bucket list of things you want to get done. I would also keep a list of courses you might not have time for this semester but would like to take eventually.

5. If a class seems like it might get full quickly (seminars basically) it might be worth reaching out to the professor. You can just drop them a line and basically be like "hey. i'm super interested in this class. insert some reasons you're interested.. could i get on the waiting list...." There is usually no waiting list but they are flattered and want engaged students so your likelihood of getting in increases...a lot. Also, make a note of any classes you need to enter an official lottery for...this is usually true for all of the English classes so make sure you are on top of the dates for that (they should e-mail you about it too but [here's the deets](#) on that)

5. Before shopping period, I would narrow down your class selections to anywhere from 4-8. I would NOT advise shopping more than three classes (and by shopping I mean going to classes you're not absolutely committed to) for a long period of time. It's totally fine to check out more than 3 (by checkout I mean go to the first class...don't drive yourself crazy though), but I wouldn't seriously shop more than three classes (which is pushing it already). You have to keep up with the workload for all of the classes because professors basically ignore shopping week.

You should then log onto yale.edu/sis and then log into yale.edu/ocs. From there you should add these classes to your schedule. I would also make a note of when/if you need to sign-up for section. The worst thing ever is when you don't get the section late because you over slept/forgot. Put it in your calendar, set a reminder, and make yourself get up.

Also, it's important to keep in mind what sort of workload each class demands. You should look at the syllabus for each class and see what assignments are due when and what type of assignments they require. Some classes will require PSETS, some papers,

and some papers and PSETS. Most people like to have a mix of classes. Having five PSETs a week might be okay for some people (definitely not me) and having all papers in classes might be totally fine for others (definitely not me). I would say for your first semester, try and strike a balance but play to your strengths. That way you can figure out what's going on and what you really like. Also, if you're between two classes it might be helpful to know the midterm dates. You do not want to have all your midterms on one week. It will be awful. Unlike finals, you do not have a dedicated week to prepare for your midterms. You have to do all of your assignments for all of your classes and get ready for the test...so try and spread them out across a few weeks if you can.

6. Don't stress about bluebooking though. Some of the best schedules are ones that sort of fall together. That said, you should probably put in some effort and try and map out some semblance of plan--you'll probably like your classes a lot more that way + decrease your stress level.

7. Make sure you use the class reviews. They are invaluable. Yalies fill out these reviews after they have finished the class but before they get their grades. They are anonymous so no one has any reason to pander to profs. Read the reviews carefully. Let them guide you. They have saved my life numerous times. Also, if you really really read them carefully and people take time to write the reviews well, you can usually learn something about the nature of the midterms and finals and the professor. That's good stuff.

Ira: Yes Nikki's advice is great and I hope you all read it. Bluebooking is definitely something that's hard to get right the first time. A couple things I'll add/reiterate-- Look for classes with subjects that interest you, for sure. But I would also suggest that the professor is often more important than the subject. A good one will make you excited about a topic you weren't interested in, and a bad one will make you bored with a topic you're excited about. So like Nikki said, read the evaluations. They should be a primary bluebooking tool!

Also, in addition to making sure you have a balanced schedule (in terms of papers vs problem sets, lectures vs seminars), take a look at how the workload is spread out over the course of the semester. Will you have 5 papers due on the same week? Will you have a midterm every day? Will you have 4 final papers and 5 finals? This is something I think about once I have a general idea about what I'm going to take. Put all of the important due dates into your gcal, and see what your semester's going to look like.

If you're taking a bunch of lecture courses, it's worth thinking about how many have discussion sections. If you're taking 4-5 lectures that all have discussion sections, that can be not only be complicated to schedule but also a lot of separate class meetings you'll be running around too all semester. Sections can be great, so don't shy away from classes with them. But they can also be less great. Just make sure you're thinking about them as you bluebook-- they don't show up on your ybb.yale.edu worksheet.

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What are writing seminars?

Claire: Writing seminars are these awesome classes designed specifically to improve your writing skills. Whereas some classes may be marked as WR credits but focus on a different subject, the primary goal of these classes is to prepare you for college-level writing. There are various levels of these writing courses, designed to make sure all students are challenged and grow. Here's a brief summary of the most basic ones:

English 114: Writing Seminars focus on nonfiction writing. This course will help improve your writing, reading, and research skills. Each course takes on a focus "such as vision, globalization, generosity, experts and expertise, the goodlife, and dissent in American Culture." The Yale Blue Book normally doesn't list these topics, only the names of the professors, so be sure to check the English department website for this information.

English 115: Literature Seminars focus on fiction writing, although there will definitely be some nonfiction prose as well. This course will improve your writing, reading, and critical analysis skills. These courses also focus on a particular theme such as war, justice, childhood, sex and gender, the supernatural, and the natural world. Again, check the English department website for a list of what themes are available each semester.

English 120: Reading and Writing the Modern Essay is a phenomenal course taught by a number of professors each semester. The course is designed to teach you about essay writing of various sorts: interview, comedy, persuasive, place, and more. If the format is the same as it has been in previous years, you spend a week writing a first draft of the essay, get feedback from your classmates/professor, and then you spend the second week completing a second draft of the same essay. It's a lot of writing, but

it is really fun and incredibly helpful. (I took a class with Professor Barbara Stuart, and she's super cool..)

Andre: please note: a LOT of writing. be prepared.

Nikki:Barbara Stuart is SO great. Love her.

English 121: Styles of Academic and Professional Prose is not open to first-semester freshmen, and is only open to second-semester freshmen if you take 114 or 120 in the first semester---so it's something to keep in mind! The setup seems to be very similar to 114. Each class has a theme (Food Writing, Writing for Radio, etc.) and you read and write several essays related to these themes. They're fun classes, especially because you may get the chance to read and write about something you hadn't considered.

For course descriptions, placement info, and registration info, check out the [English department page](#) on Introductory English courses. **Don't forget:** most of these classes require pre-registration. Be sure to check the [English department website](#) for information about pre-registering.

Clare: In the section about English placement I cover which English class to take as a freshman - so armed with this info, go find out which is right for YOU! [Go there now.](#)

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What are freshman seminars?

Claire: A seminar is a class that is capped at a much smaller number, normally between 12 and 30. These classes are generally much more interactive, with students and professors sitting around a round table discussing ideas. This allows you to get to know your professors and classmates much better than a larger lecture would, but also means you need to keep up with class material.

Okay, it can be really hard to get into regular seminars as a freshman because most professors go by seniority. Also, regular seminars often ask for work that's more advanced than most freshmen feel ready to do. Luckily, freshman seminars exist to give you the opportunity to take a small class, to try out a major or a department, to make strong connections with a professor or other freshman, and to explore a particular subject in depth.

A list of all the freshmen seminars can be found [here](#). Read the info, mark off any that interest you, and check them out!

How to get in? It's all by lottery. You sign up online. (The system changes every year, but in the past few years it has been on a single website where you rank your top 3 preferences and provide a brief, 1-paragraph explanation of why the class interests you.) If you don't get into a freshman seminar this semester, you'll be given priority second semester. Finally, DS and Perspectives in Engineering freshmen usually are not allowed to take freshman seminars unless there is a spot open and no waiting list.

If you are placed on the waiting list or if you're turned down and you really, really want to be in the class, go to the first day of the class! Talk to the professor, explain your interest, show enthusiasm for the subject, and you may just make it onto a list. It's worth a shot.

Andre: These are great tools for you to get into a seminar. However, I have been in several seminars not specifically for freshmen, but the teacher wanted a heterogenous class so he or she chose several freshmen anyway. So, you're certainly not guaranteed to get in, but it is certainly worth going to any seminar that interests you during shopping period. You never know what you may get into.

Nikki: You can also e-mail professors ahead of time and ask to be put on "the waiting list." It usually never exists yet (unless the class is super popular) but the Prof. is usually flattered you think so many people want to take the class + thinks you are super into the material and will either reserve you a space or make sure you get into the class. I do this all the time nine times out of ten I "magically" win the lottery for a spot.

Ira: Yes, if you're trying to get into a seminar that is competitive, it's super important to email the professor before the first class meets. Make a case for why the class would be important to you/why you would be a good contribution for the class. Read the syllabus beforehand so you know what you're talking about.

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Are there any advantages to taking a seminar version of a class vs. a lecture version?

Nikki: I think it depends on your learning style, the class, and the teacher. When I was a freshman, I had no idea how to do a lecture class and taking a mix of seminars and lecture classes helped me figure out what I was doing. Also--some seminars have such stellar professors that taking the seminar version of a lecture class is well worth it. I also think it's easier for a professor in a seminar class to get to know you individually. This means you can form some really great lasting bonds with Profs who can end up giving you life advice + writing recs + helping you find jobs + generally being an amazing support system.

Andre: Beware of the anonymity of lectures. If you're going to be tempted to be on your facebook or Gilt or something, take notes by hand (I do it whenever I can -- organizing the notes when listening to the lecture makes me think about the material more than mindlessly typing what the professor is saying, because realistically I'm not going to go back later and figure out what was being said). Classes can be skipped if the professor is truly awful, but "I don't feel like going" is not a good reason -- you're going to look back at the end of college and wish you'd taken more advantage of what you had here.

Clare: Note that all seminars above the 200-level are upper-level seminars for juniors and seniors in the major. You can sometimes get into these (see advice from Andre and Nikki above) but it's unlikely, and they require a lot of high-level writing that you may not be prepared for. Come back to them in a year or two.

Nikki: I 100% agree with Clare. Slow down. You have time. There's nothing worse than taking a course too soon. I took some harder econ courses super early in my Yale career. In some ways I'm happy I got them out of the way + pushed myself (basically to my absolute limit...probably past it) but in other ways I wish I had waited until I was a bit more academically mature.

And also, the academic maturity thing isn't always about the grade you are going to get. That may or may not remain the same. It's more about what you're going to get out of the class + how stressful it's going to be. I definitely think you can get more out of a class if you take it when you're ready. If Yale has decided something is for Juniors and Seniors, you should probably take it as a Junior or Senior. This really isn't high school. Everybody is on point. After about 3-4 semesters at Yale you really understand what you are doing, how classes operate, what you need to do well, how to balance your schedule, and how to make to kick butt in hard classes. I'm not saying take it easy. I'm just saying play it smart and slow down.

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What in the world is a “section” and a “T.A?”

Nikki: Some classes, usually larger lecture classes (including most intro science classes and intro econ classes), require a section. A section is a 50 minute class with about 15-20 students. It is usually taught by a teaching assistant, or T.A, who is usually a graduate student. Formats for section vary, but usually material from the lecture is reviewed and reading material is discussed. Your T.A for your section typically grades all of your assignments for the class, so it's great to build a relationship with them from the get go. TBH, section can be boring and you will be tempted to skip it. Don't give into the temptation. Just go. It's 50 minutes of your life and it might just be useful. Also, sometimes profs use section to introduce material that wasn't covered in class. That stuff ends up on exams. Go to section. No matter how much it feel like it, it's really not going to kill you.

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What are office hours?

Nikki: So office hours are usually a block of time professors or TAs reserve for meeting with students. Go to office hours early and often. It's a great way to build rapport with the professor and sometimes (read: a lot of the times) they give out some helpful hints about exams and problem sets...especially if you've been coming since the beginning. Also, in lecture classes it's a way for the course to be less anonymous. Whenever I know a prof I feel a lot more guilty about being on facebook/buzzfeed/slate and remember that it's actually rude. So I actually pay attention, learn things in class, get really really helpful hints in office hrs, psets get done more quickly (read: I have more time to not sit in the library), and studying for the finals and midterms (which I got some office hours only pointers on) doesn't seem as awful. Maybe 1-3% of your class will show up to office hours. Please be one of those peoples. It's something no one does but it pays mad dividends.

Zaina: Not to get ahead of myself, but getting to know the professor also means that later, if you are trying to figure out what to do over the summer or with your life, you have someone who knows you/your style to talk to about it!

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How can I figure out what all of these abbreviations mean (WLH, SO, HTBA)?

Andre: Please don't waste your time learning these before you come to college

(actually, do learn where WLH and SSS are. Those are pretty important). For the most part, you will see ridiculous letters listed after your class name, and then you will use [this website](#) to find their names, or go straight [here](#) to see both the building name and location.

The one exception is HTBA, which is a building that only seniors know about because that is where we take our one-on-one, senior-only classes. Not really. I actually have no idea what the H stands for, but the rest is “to be announced”: basically, they know they’re teaching the class, but don’t know how big the class is going to be yet so they haven’t listed a classroom. When you use OCI to register, you’ll receive information on where to go for day 1.

Nikki: Andre- H stands for hours. Duh. HTBA is usually something you will see for second semester classes because the exact time/location is yet “to be arranged.”

Andre: ah.

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How should I decide which level of class I should take?

Nikki: As a rule of thumb, take things that push you but won’t break you. Talk to people who have taken the class before and professors and take their advice seriously. They know the difficulty of the course and generally won’t lead you astray (but use your own judgement too....like, if the student you’re asking a notorious math genius about Math 120 you should take that into account).

It’s totally fine to take the introductory levels of courses. I think a lot of people come into Yale with the mindset that they need to take the hardest thing they can possibly place into. I would say chill. Basically everything at Yale is hard. Even most “guts” are hard. It’s all relative here. And your classmates are literally the most intelligent kids in the country. Just because a class is first or lower in the progression of classes does not mean it’s a joke...usually quite the opposite. The introductory classes here are really intermediate/advanced classes. No one is going to look at your transcript and be like “oh, what, she took English 114, she’s obviously not a serious student.” or “this kid took intro econ. well they totally screwed around.” No one.

This isn’t to say that you shouldn’t challenge yourself. You absolutely should . But don’t get caught up in class numbers and labels. Do what’s right for you and right for your schedule holistically. If you’re taking three really super intense science classes,

you probably don't want to add on the hardest english class you can take on top of that....unless you want to spend all your time in the library and hate your life (Trust me, I kind of did this to myself first semester freshman year and hate myself for it). Find your balance. It's different for everyone so don't compare yourself to other people.

Also remember that freshman year, just getting adjusted to Yale + making friends is like a class in and of itself...and honestly is probably one of your most important classes of your Yale career. Take it seriously and don't overload yourself. Building friendships is way more important than getting ahead in your econ/chem/bio/english/whatever class series. (Ira: Yes)

Oh, and don't get tricked by shopping the first few classes at Yale...especially intro courses. You'll often shop a class and be like "oh, I know all this material. these people need to get on my level." But trust me, more often than not, they cover all the material you know in 3-5 class meetings and then it is all new and challenging material from there. The first few classes are almost always the absolute easiest. The syllabus can be helpful in this regard...but remember that just because you know the concepts doesn't mean you know it to the extent that Yale wants you to know it. Trust the OCI reviews, trust what previous students tell you, and trust your gut. At the end of the day, it's usually better to not suffer through a class just for the sake of taking one level higher. You also don't want to get into the position where you have to drop the class after shopping period or take a W on your transcript and withdraw.

Math

Zaina: Take the placement test, and start your math classes early, aka freshman year (before you your high school skillz atrophy). If you are a science/engineering/econ major, I am talking to you. If you are someone looking to do a QR credit, and you are interested in math classes, I am talking to you too. I am glad I did my math classes during my freshman year, especially because it also opened up doors to other non-math classes with math pre-reqs. One of the fun things the math department does: during Camp Yale, almost every student trying to take a calculus (MATH 112, 115, 120) class lines up at the math building to sign up on literal sign up sheets for their professor/class/time of interest. Read the professor reviews, because the professor of a math class can make a huge difference in your math experience. Look at the class times that fit into your schedule, or make the classes with the best rated professors fit into your schedule. Line up early. I got in line at 9 am (doors open at 9 am), and there were at least 100 people ahead of me. Some people had gotten in line

at 6 am. Some people (not too many though), had blankets. Think Black Friday. I was number 40-something on Michael Frame's class list. I had to draw my own line to write my name on, with the approval of Professor Frame, and I barely got into the class. But it was SO worth it.

Note of encouragement: I (Andre) bombed my math placement test. like, maybe around a 50%. But I showed up to the registration with my AP scores and they let me be in the same class Zaina was in. The class wasn't bad at all -- pay attention to your placement test scores, but talk it over with one of us if you're not sure that the score is 100% reflective of your abilities.

Nikki: I got there at 5:45 in the morning. It was worth it. I got my first choice in section so my entire semester was so much better. I would say just do what you have to do and get up early so you can get exactly what you want.

Economics

Nikki: So it is advised that most people start out with intro economics. Although the course is titled "intro," it is actually taught using an intermediate book and covers the basics of economics very quickly. If you took AP econ, basically all of that is covered in classes 1-4. A lot of things will be easier for you though, since you have that foundation, but I don't think that course alone is nearly enough to skip into the intermediate levels. If you've taken some extensive econ courses and have mad math skills, then we should talk about skipping the intro classes. For all you prospective econ people, I have a lot of questions from problem sets from both classes (no answers though) that can help you decide which one might be the right fit.

Anyways...most students start with introductory microeconomics, but you can start with macroeconomics too. I would recommend doing what comes most naturally to you first and saving the less intuitive course for second semester.

For the intro courses, there is the option of taking a lecture or a seminar. Both courses cover the same material, but the seminar is only about 25-35 students per class (the seminar instructor usually teaches multiple classes). You should use the instructor reviews on OCI and your personal preference for class sizes when choosing between the courses. As for the grading, both courses are on a curve and the class size doesn't really impact your grade all that much. One thing to keep in mind, though, is that the lecture class will have sections + TAs, which means you will have another resource for learning, but will also have another 50 minute block of time for

the class. On the other hand, for the seminars, the professors are pretty accessible and it can be cool to work with the people who write the midterm and the final one-on-one (you can do this in the lecture too, it might just be a little tougher to get individualized attention)

Side note: I think the best taught seminar is Tolga Koker's Introductory Micro. As an econ major, I think it's one of the best taught and most accessible econ classes at Yale. It's challenging but it's really not that bad. Tolga makes micro as simple and straightforward as possible and even gives out a study guide which is such a rarity at Yale.

Additionally, there is a class taught by Tolga Koker that is Econ 108a. This is a level lower than your standard introductory class and really focuses on fundamentals. It's a really small class but people really enjoy taking it. It is usually people who aren't as strong in math (remember that you're at Yale now and "not being strong in math" is a relative term) or want to go at a slower pace.

Clare: The Tolga Koker 110a Introductory Micro class is a ton of work with some pretty intense kids- my worst grade at Yale, and I'm an EP&E major. Take this if you want to be an Econ major, not if you think you might like econ. If econ's not your MAIN focus freshman year, do not take the seminar.

Sciences

Zaina: Science kids-- this is important. Very important. If you are remotely interested in the sciences and engineering, note that most of these majors have several prereqs. Some majors have as many prereqs as actual major classes. Sciences/engineering are awesome, but you should strongly consider starting the pre-reqs for your (potential) major, which will likely include one or more prereqs, during your freshman year. If you are wondering which level math/chemistry/biology/physics class to take, you should definitely feel free to consult one of your friendly science-y and/or pre-med frocos (Zaina, Shuaib, Andre). We will give you the best advice we can (and share our experiences), but we might also refer you to people we know who have your specific (potential) major.

To identify the right science class level for you, you should definitely plan to take the placement tests (if you haven't) for math, chemistry, and/or biology (check your emails- you should have received an email from Mr. Levesque about this! Bottom line: if you are interested in sciences/engineering/pre-med, you should determine the level of science class that is right for you, and start with those pre-reqs freshman

year! It is easy to jump off the science/engineering/pre-med boat during your later semesters, but it becomes more and more difficult to get on the boat after your freshman year.

Finally, if you have any questions about joining or finding a lab, please let me know! It can seem daunting to find/email a professor at a lab you're interested in. I assure you though, most professors love to have students working with them! This includes sciences, engineering, computer science (but by the way, humanities and social science professors also take on research assistants if you're interested!)

Andre: if you've taken ap/ibs, **it is very, very nice to skip the intro bios**. Come talk to Zaina, Shuaib, and Andre about Chem, though --as a pre-med, it may actually be nice to take the two-semester chem sequence rather than the one semester, if you're not actually passionate about chemistry.

Zaina: Yes to what Andre says above! I took Chem 118 and its lab, so I took Biochem for the second chem pre-med requirement (thankfully it was a good class), but now I probably have to take Biochem lab to make up for the second semester of lab.

Nikki: If you are not a science person (like me), I think it can be wise to wait to fulfil your science credits until second semester freshman year and beyond. Give yourself a chance to adjust to Yale and play to your strengths while you do so (you should still explore but just be smart about it). There's also some really great science for non-science majors that teach you a ton of really interesting information while still being accessible. I will say this though, even if you hate science and detest it, learn how to read and interpret academic research during your time here. I never took a lab or a hardcore science course, but I took some courses with emphasis on interpreting scientific studies and I'm so happy I did. It's such a great life skill and it allows you to really understand the information your doctors, the media, and whoever else is telling you. You can understand/evaluate the studies and make a decision for yourself. It's a pretty powerful thing that I think all people, sciency or not, should have.

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English/Writing

Clare: Take a class your first semester that will help you with your writing. Seriously. You can do with with a freshman seminar or a WR class in any department - and those

are great - but Yale has the best English department **in the country**, so check it out! Even if you'd never in a million years major in English or even read a poem there's something for you. Most people take one of these classes as a freshman or sophomore, so you won't be the only non-English-major there.

Yale's English department is divided into three levels: introductory seminars for freshmen and sophomores, lecture courses, and upper-level junior and senior seminars. (If you're tempted by some of the lecture courses, know that you have to take two semesters of the following classes first.)

Here's what they offer for freshmen. All of these classes are taught by professors - each professor is required to teach an introductory seminar each year.

Claire Daviss has offered her thoughts on these above, so go read what she says, too! [You can read that here.](#)

English 114/English 115 - Great classes to take if you don't want to be an English major but you want to feel solid about bringing your writing up to a college level. Tons of people take these and love them.

If you want to be an English major, take a look at 127-130 instead or 125/126.

English 120: Reading and Writing the Modern Essay - This class is a beloved classic. Many, many Yale students, English majors or not, take this at some point during their four years. You will hear many freshman and sophomores asking "So which section of 120 are *you* shopping this morning?" Read this before jumping on the bandwagon.

You write 4-6 personal essays during the course of the semester and workshop them with the other students. The flavor of the course varies wildly by professor, so this is a course where it's worth it to shop a few sections.

A few caveats. First, it's a lot of writing, so if you don't feel confident in the cleanliness of your prose, the clarity of your voice, and the fluidity of your ideas think carefully before taking this your first semester. Second - and this is something many people don't realize - it won't teach you how to write an academic essay. The word "essay" in the title refers to things like "personal essay," like the kind of thing you'd read in the New Yorker. (In fact, you read a lot of old New Yorker essays.) So if you went to a high school that didn't stress academic writing and you want to figure out how that kind of thing works, take 114 or 115 instead. Finally, this class involves no

written analysis of the brilliant work you read by other people. Your writing is supposed to emulate rather than analyze the reading. For some people this is refreshing; for others it's a pain in the butt. Think about which kind of writer you are. (You might not know yet!)

Who is this perfect for? A first semester freshman who did some creative writing in high school and wants to continue at Yale as a major or an extracurricular activity, or second semester freshman who has already taken one WR credit.

Who is this not perfect for? Someone who isn't yet confident in his or her academic or creative writing. Someone who is taking several other hard or time-consuming classes during the same semester. Someone who wants to be an English major so that he or she can analyze literature. (This was me, and it's the only class in the English department that I didn't love. If you want to read poetry, not write creative essays, keep reading.)

English 121 - see Claire Daviss's description. They didn't have these when we were freshmen, but they sound like harder versions of 114, but probably not as hard as 120. Take it if you're interested in the specific subject or professor.

English 125/126: Major English Poets - Legend has it that this is the oldest continuously-taught course at Yale. Allegedly, it has been the official pre-requisite to the English major since the 1920s, and the only syllabus change was the addition of TS Eliot at some point.

This is the hardest of the freshman/sophomore English courses. There are very few freshman - it's mostly sophomore English majors. During the fall semester, you read Chaucer, Spenser, and Donne. It's a lot of reading, and the analytical writing is held to a higher standard than in the other courses described in this section. That being said, it was hands down my favorite course from freshman year, and is still in my top five. If it's for you, you'll love it!

So who should take this? The website says something dumb like "anyone who scored over a 750 on their writing SAT." Your writing SAT has nothing to do with your ability to analyze Chaucer, so ignore that. You should take this as a freshman if there is a pretty good chance you'll want to be an English major and you want to get started *and* if you feel very confident in your ability to analyze verse orally and in writing. If you fit both of those, it will be totally worth your time.

The big overlap here is not people who are thinking of 114/115 but people who are thinking of DS. It's like a DS-level class but with a shorter reading list that allows you to really sink your teeth into specific stanzas of Donne. Take this instead of DS if you don't want to deal with political philosophy or stuff in translation or a needlessly hectic pace- you just want English literature, and you love to close-read.

Who should not take this as a freshman? Everyone else. If you think you want to be an English major but you're not so confident in your writing, take 114/115 or 127-130. If you just like poetry but you want to major in chemistry, be aware that this is a time-intensive class that might be a better fit sophomore year when you've started to hit your stride (aka it gets easier as you get more used to Yale).

English 127: Readings in American Literature

English 129: Tragedy

English 130: Epic

I've grouped these together because they're similar, and also because this is getting long. These are literature seminars that are more difficult than 115 but not as difficult as 125/126. They are great options for a person who thinks he or she might want to be an English major but isn't sure, or for a person who is pretty sure he or she wants to be an English major but doesn't feel as confident in his or her writing skills, or for someone who wants to knock out the classics without committing to DS. (I took 130 for the final reason as a junior and loved it!) These classes are doable for people who are not humanities majors.

[Click here to learn more about the setup of each English class.](#)

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Languages

Connor: Yale is blessed with a number of fantastic language programs from French to Swahili. Apart from language classes and professors there is a strong network of formal language support ranging from free conversational partners and programs for nearly every language at the [Center for Language Study](#). There are also plenty of informal ways to maintain or explore languages via language tables (weekly meetings of language speakers to practice and break bread), the language partners club, among others.

Shuaib: NOTE: If you are interested in testing out of a language requirement, [info](#)

[here](#), be sure to practice this summer and be on the lookout for the [testing times and locations](#).

Directed Studies

Andre: If you don't have a definite interest in the humanities, don't take DS as a way to get some basic exposure. There's just too much out there to lock yourself into 6 credits right off the bat. It's incredibly cool material that you probably won't learn anywhere else, but credits are valuable things. --Andre

Nikki: I second what Andre said. If you just want to know about the DS material to be able to hold a conversation/sound educated, there are some survey courses that will get you there. DS is for those who are really really into it.

Clare: Totally agree. I wish I'd done it because it because it relates to both of my majors (English & EP&E). But don't do it if you want to double major in chem and computer science or something.

Ira: I'm back.

I first want to comment on what Andre and Nikki wrote-- I mostly agree with them, but want to clarify. They are right that DS is a big commitment and you should be excited about it. But that's where I draw the line-- if you're excited about it, it's for you. You don't have to think you're going to major in the humanities (though most will), or even know what your major will be. DS is an awesome program, and I believe it provides a foundation that's great for anyone to have-- even you science majors. If you're thinking about a science major and DS, it won't be easy. Far from it. You'll have to carefully plan out your prereqs and credits, and you really do have to be excited about DS (it's ok to be nervous too). But it's still worth considering. Definitely discuss your schedule with your FroCo if this is you. And like Nikki and Andre said, there are a lot of great alternatives to DS too.

Zaina: I know a few science majors who did DS, so come talk to me if you are considering this path!

The workload

It is not light. Every week you will have reading totaling in hundreds of pages. On the [Directed Studies website](#) you can find the reading schedule from last year (though the reading list will largely stay the same, there are often some changes from year to year).

There is also a weekly ~5 page essay, alternating between Lit, HP, and Philosophy. But every few weeks you have a week off from the essay, which is great.

Each course also has a final exam at the end of each semester.

But it's very manageable. Since the three courses coordinate, you won't get a horrible week where you have a bunch of stuff due on the same day. And since the format stays the same all year, you will always know what's coming. It might be difficult to adjust, but once you do you're set. It's a matter of getting a system for getting the reading done efficiently, and being proactive about the essay (coming from a person who consistently did the whole paper the night before, which can also work if you're into that). If you keep up with the work throughout the year, then the final exams won't be a big deal.

Why I have no regrets about DS

If you have gotten into DS but are not sure if you want to do it, come talk to me during Camp Yale. There is definitely a discussion to be had. But for now, I'll say a little about why I'm absolutely glad I did DS.

- The format: I'm a fan of seminars, especially for Freshmen. And DS ensures your schedule will be dominated by them. You will have (mostly) great professors, and be in sections full of intense students. Though this can be a lot to handle, it's intellectually rigorous and ensures you will get a lot academically out of Freshman year.

- Academic Preparation-- DS will give you a lot of great practice essay writing, handling large amounts of reading, interacting closely with professors, and participating in discussion sections. A lot of good writing practice.

- And of course, the material-- you will read some awesome stuff. I read some of my favorites in DS. But more importantly, I valued the collective experience over individual works. Seeing the development of Western thought, how writers and philosophers drew from their predecessors, watching ideas develop, is quite amazing. This I think is the main benefit of DS. There are other survey courses that cover Philosophy, or Literature, but no other program that deals with Lit, Philosophy, and HP together where you can explore the connections in papers and discussions. The point of DS is not to master the Western canon. You won't be a Plato expert after DS, nor will you have a full grasp of Tolstoy after spending just two weeks on *War and Peace*. But you will have a sense of the development of the canon, and you will at least be

literate in the big questions and ideas that Western thinkers have grappled with for centuries.

Making the most of DS

- Shop sections-- The way DS works is at the beginning of each semester you are assigned sections and professors for each class. However, there is an informal process for switching sections during shopping period. There will be a big DS email list, and you can use it to solicit other students to switch sections with you. The main purpose for this is logistical-- if your fourth class conflicts with one of your DS sections, you'll try to switch sections. But it's also worth looking at class reviews to see what your professor is like. Most will be great. There are a few that are less great.

Upperclassmen (read: me, the other FroCos) are a good resource for figuring this out as well. If you're not thrilled with your professor, take initiative and try to switch.

Also, come talk to me to see which professors I think are great.

- Do the reading. Like any class, there will be people who do more reading than others. And you will probably have tough weeks where it's just impossible to finish all of the reading. That's ok. But I really think the more you read, the more you'll get out of it.

- Try not to fall behind. That gets hard. I'll be surprised if you don't at some point. When you do, it might be a good idea to just skip to where you're supposed to be, and make up the other reading if you have time later. Maybe-- dealing with this will depend on the situation, the person, and the nature of the reading.

- Meet with your professors-- true of any class. They will be helpful with your papers.

- Also, take advantage of the papers. DS is so fast-paced. The papers are really the only way to explore readings/ideas in a good amount of depth. Pick topics that interest you.

Beyond DS:

It's recommended taking just one additional class each semester. I took a fifth class Credit/D one semester on a subject I was comfortable with- and that was a lot but not too bad.

I'd recommend taking classes that exercise a different form of thinking. The semester I took a math class with DS, I enjoyed working on the problem sets as a break from reading/paper writing.

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How many credits are classes worth? How many classes should I take

freshman fall?

Clare: For the most part, a class is worth a credit. (This is different than some of your friends at other schools, perhaps.) Some language classes are 1.5 credits, and some labs are .5 credits.

It's not standard for freshman to take five classes, though you are allowed to. I would strongly suggest not taking five classes. It's definitely possible, and I bet it's really tempting after seeing all of the classes Yale has to offer, but there are a couple of pretty compelling reasons not to.

First of all, freshman fall is a really important time to make friends. It's one of the most important things you can do, I think, to set yourself up for future success and happiness at Yale. You'll want time to play IMs on Monday afternoons with Davenport, stay up late on Thursday nights talking about nothing with your roommate, and eat long brunches on Sundays with your suite. These are the best memories from freshman year, and there's plenty of time later to take five classes a semester. Consider free random unplanned social time another whole class freshman fall.

Second of all, freshman fall is a great time to get involved with activities on campus - they're the best way to make Yale start to feel like home, and they give you a great launching pad when it comes time to apply for a summer internship. Most freshman join a bunch of activities in the fall and spring and then narrow it down to two or three they really care about by the time they're juniors and seniors - so get ready to sample a bunch to find out which feel best to you. Some activities, like rushing an a capella group or joining a sports team, can feel like an entire class.

Finally, taking five classes is a pretty tricky balancing act that requires some planning and consideration. Some people never do, in fact - they get up to 36 credits by taking 4.5 every semester or studying abroad in the summer. When you take five credits in a semester, you'll want to balance them carefully so that you don't drown in work, and it's hard going in to figure out which kinds of classes will feel easy for you and which will require a lot of effort. Your freshman fall will be spent getting used to the kind of academic effort that Yale professors look for, so you don't want to stretch yourself too thin. When I take five classes in a semester, I Credit/D one of them, but figuring out where to use a credit/D can be tricky.

I would really strongly suggest you take 4 or 4.5 credits. That being said, you're totally allowed to take five.

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How are grades calculated at Yale?

Most grades for large classes are calculated on a your standard bell curve. For large lecture classes, professors will usually announce what percentage of the class will receive As, Bs, Cs, etc. Smaller courses usually just assign individual grades based on your performance. You can find the weights for each letter grade [here](#).

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How do I do shopping week?

Clare: It's definitely the most hectic part of Yale, but it's worth it. Basically, it's a mix.

Some classes - mostly lectures - you just show up to, sit in on a class, and see if you like the professor. Selecting your section time happens a few days in. 99% of the time there are enough seats for everyone who wants to take the class.

Other classes - mostly seminars - require pre-registration. You'll get emails about freshman seminars and writing classes in mid-August. Stay on top of those dates and get lucky with the lottery, and you'll have a few of your classes set before shopping period begins.

Some classes (language, math, and science) require placement tests before classes begin. You'll get emails about this too.

Then there are other free-for-all classes. Some math and science classes require you to stand in line outside of the department to sign up! And upper-level seminars (anything above the 100 level that is taught by a professor and capped at 18) usually admit juniors and seniors in the major before opening up slots to underclassmen and/or other majors. Getting into these classes is a brutal art.

(In fact, as far as upper-level seminars go, I would be wary of trying to take these freshman year unless you have background knowledge in the subject. Really reading and writing heavy, and it's highly unlikely you'll get in. Better to spend freshman year taking writing classes, pre-requirements, cool lectures, and offerings available only to freshman, like freshman seminars.)(on the other hand, Andre has never failed to get into a seminar. I'm not skilled, just lucky, but it can happen)

Upperclassmen pack their first-week shopping schedules with classes, trying to get into seminars and compare professors and syllabi. But if the idea of comparing

professors and classes and trying to get into seminars makes you nervous, it's okay not to go full-throttle your freshman fall. I figured out what I wanted beforehand, read class reviews online to find good professors and got lucky with my English placement, so I barely shopped at all. It made the beginning of Yale much less stressful. I loved my classes, got prereqs out of the way, and still had seven semesters left to shop like crazy.

Basically, know that this feels like a tough process to subject you to during your first month of Yale, but it will be over, and we will make sure that you get a schedule that works for you. We'll guide you guys through the process so you know what to do and where to go and what to expect. The most important thing you can do is pay close attention to your email starting about mid-August!

Zaina: I would say, try **really** hard to narrow it down to 5-6 classes (at least by the end of the first week!). Trying to keep up with all the classes I shopped first semester freshman year put me behind in the classes I eventually decided to take- it was stressful. I got sick (lack of sleep, too much caffeine, trying to do everything) and had to get a Dean's excuse for my first ever problem set. Twas not fun.

Andre: Don't do so much shopping that you drop. Read professor reviews beforehand and pay attention when people rate the class as hard/a lot of work (this isn't high school anymore. what's hard for us is going to be hard for you, too.) Also, lots of people have the attitude that shopping period isn't really school starting. Don't get yourself stressed later, take the classes seriously if you're expecting to take it, because class starts on day 1 of shopping period for these professors. (Zaina: *Snaps*)

Also, it's a great idea to acquire your books as soon as possible. If it's a big textbook, buy it from the yale bookstore, don't mark it up, and buy another one from Amazon. You can return books to the bookstore for full price for the first two weeks (ish) of a semester. If it's a lit class, buy the first few weeks' books at the bookstore, and the rest off of your online vendor of choice.

[More about books here.](#)

Ira: Also, don't be afraid to leave a class early during shopping period. I know it seems rude, but if you know you don't like the class/you want to shop another class at the same time, go for it.

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Food & Fitness

How do Yalies keep in shape? Any recommendations?

Connor: Intramurals are a great option! Meet upperclassmen, represent your college, and get a workout all at the same time! Payne Whitney Gym and Davenport gym are also good options; running or biking around New Haven (I particularly like going to East Rock Park) is also good. [Yale even started a bike share system last spring](#), so you can still bike even if you don't want to bring your bike to campus!

Zaina: A Zagster account costs \$20 for the year, and you get a refund if you take the bike safety class. Also, we may or may not have IM field trips; get excited. Bring your gear, aka gym shoes. We provide the t-shirt. Also, East Rock is great.

Andre: I went on FOOT, one of the pre-orientation programs, and made pretty good friends with one of the guys on the trip. We decided to be lifting buddies (we're still really good friends), but having that accountability keeps you in the gym and makes it a social activity. or you could go HAM like Nikki and do P90X all through freshman year.

Claire: I started running in college, and it has been the best. It's a really good way to make friends, to explore some of the parks close to campus, and to stay healthy. I'd recommend checking out St. Ronan St, Orange St, East Rock Park, and Edgewood Park, going with people for at least the first few runs you do.

Nikki: I'm a huge fan of club sports. I think they are a great way to stay in shape, meet new people, and travel across the east coast. You can [check club sports out here](#). This is also my shameless plug for Women's Club Basketball. It's supa fun + a great workout! I think intramurals are great too, but you're not obligated to go so it's really easy for your commitment to staying fit to fall by the wayside.

I really like picking a time earlier in the day and committing to working out. It means that you can get your workout in before other things pop up and it also is a killer way to start the day. I also really like [Payne Whitney Gym](#) (the pool and the indoor track are also here). It has way more equipment than the Dport gym (it's a 5-6 minute walk from Welch), but is a 8-9 minute walk from Welch. Payne Whitney also has [some discounted exercise classes](#). (Also, this gym is swamped between 4-7:30 so I try to avoid those hours). Some of them are hit or miss, but you can shop some of the most

popular classes during camp Yale.

If you're into yoga, there are [free classes in Berkeley College](#). The classes can be hit or miss too, but they are pretty high quality for free classes. I'm also a huge fan of the yoga studio [The Breathing Room](#). They have some awesome classes at a wide variety of times + discounts for students.

You can also take some hiking/outdoorsy trips with [Yale Outdoors](#). Another great way to stay in shape, meet new people, and explore off-campus.

Also, there's [Crossfit New Haven](#) which has really solid coaches who actually know a lot about functional fitness, body alignment, screening for movement + mobility, and lifting (I don't trust all crossfit gyms but this one is mostly on point). It's not walkable (it's about 2 miles away...not that you can't walk two miles but 4 miles on top of a Crossfit workout it is death...a slow painful death) but you can usually run there and/or bum a ride off grad school students, or take the Yale Shuttle as far out there as possible, or bike (not as painful as walking obviously, but make sure you're ready to workout + bike to and from). You can also usually negotiate a student price or you can just work independently (and more cheaply) with an individual coach outside of the box to get your programming. You can totally [e-mail me](#) for more deets.

Also, another cheaper option (what I did my frosh year) is ordering a copy of Insanity or P90X and just doing it in the gym (there's usually space in Dport gym in the corner and always space in Payne Whitney).

Clare: Join the Ultimate Frisbee team. It's okay if you've never even seen a frisbee in your life - we'll show you how!

Andre: If we're all plugging here, Club lax needs a few good men (and Ladies lax needs some women) this year.

Clare: One more thing: if you're on a varsity team and you want to talk about balance, come talk to me! I played that game for two years.

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Food? How do I get non-dining hall food?

Nikki: So New Haven has [a bunch of great restaurants](#). There's also [restaurant week](#), a

week in which a lot of major restaurants have a price-fixed sampler menu.

In terms of groceries, you basically have two options. There's a [co-op on Chapel Street](#) (a 6-8 minute walk from Welch). It's like a less robust version of Whole Foods but sources great produce and a ton of natural products, along with your usual grocery staples and brands.

There's also a [Stop and Shop](#) (the northeastern version of Giant for all my southern state people) up Dixwell Avenue (about a 15 minute walk from Welch).

There are also a [few farmer's markets](#) around the area run by CitySeed . It's really nice to pick up a few things on Saturday mornings and just explore the market. The biggest one is in Wooster Square--a very pretty + very historic area of New Haven.

Lastly, and most infamously/famously, there's Gheav (or Gourmet Heaven).It's like a bodega with a hot bar. Gheav is convenient. That cannot be denied. But it so ridiculously over priced. Like it's unreal. It's hard to avoid Gheav at times, but if you stock up on snacks at cheaper locations (which is basically anywhere) you can avoid spending all your money there. Save Gheav for times it can't be avoided. Try not to rely on it because it adds up really really quickly.

Clare: But don't worry - our dining halls are amazing, and they provide all of your meals.

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What if I have food allergies + special food restrictions?

Nikki: So this can be tricky. Yale tries to do their best, but if you have a food allergy you know that it's really hard for people without food allergies to really get where you're coming from.

Gluten Intolerance: They are trying to source more gluten free options and you can always get creative with the salad bar. I will say that if you do have a severe gluten intolerance, sometimes the meat can be cooked in sauces that contain gluten...so be careful. There is, however, grilled chicken at every meal (except on the weekends) so you can make it work. A lot of dining halls now have gluten free sections with gluten free bread, cracker, pretzels, etc. so if you're into things like that it's there.

Lactose Intolerant: Most Yale dining halls have lactaid, soy milk, and (sometimes!)

almond milk. That said, the dining hall sometimes to throw a lot of cheese on things but it's usually not too prohibitive.

Nuts: Yale marks everything that contains nuts. I think a nut allergy will affect your dessert options more than anything else.

Kosher: Claire's Corner Copia and FroyoWorld (as far as Zaina knows, based on friends' suggestion) are the only strictly kosher places to eat, and both are pretty awesome! Slifka (on Wall Street) also has a kosher kitchen that serves the regular meals each day, as well as special holiday and Shabbat meals.

Halal: All the chicken in the dining halls is halal! Davenport and some of the other dining halls also have halal hot dogs (and sometimes burgers) from the grill. There are also weekly halal dinners and lunches held by the Muslim Students Association - dates to be determined! Restaurants with halal food: Aladdins, Zaroka -- come talk to me for more suggestions. -Zaina

Bottom line-Nikki: As someone with mild food allergies (gluten and lactose), I think your best bet is to have a well stocked fridge. You can definitely eat in the dining halls, but you might need to supplement your meals. I definitely didn't my freshman year and by the end of the year almost gagged at the sight of grilled chicken and spring mix (that said, Yale has gotten way better about food allergies in recent years). I usually make a weekly trip to the co-op/farmer's market and stock up on things and store them in my fridge during the week (I try to not spend more than \$10-15 a week). I then just grab things to take to the dining hall to add to/replace whatever they are serving. You can also rent out the Davenport Kitchen and cook things and then store those in your fridge and grab and go. Also, I have never really pursued this, but you can work with the dining hall managers to make sure you are getting food that works for you. Definitely [e-mail me](#) if you have any questions about food allergies at Yale.

Claire: I have heard from friends who are gluten intolerant that dining hall managers are really helpful if you contact them. They can get special foods for you if you think of something. For example, I have a gluten intolerant friend in Stiles, and the Ezra Stiles-Morse dining hall has a brick oven for pizza. She told the manager that she was gluten intolerant, and now they have gluten free pizzas available for her when she requests them ahead of time. That is pretty awesome.

Nikki: YES! Some dhall managers are more receptive than others though. It's

definitely worth reaching out to the dport managers....I'm just super picky about it and do my own thing.

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Transportation & Move-In

This Bed Bath and Beyond list is cray. How can I tell what I actually need?

Nikki: Okay so those lists are cray. Here are the things I think you absolutely need (excluding things you will probably split with your suite) and the rest is just personal preference.

- pencils
- paper
- fans (there is NO AC. NONE.)
- lighting (there is no overhead lighting)
- bed sheets + comforter (the on-campus linen option is too expensive for what you get)
- mattress pad (optional, but the mattresses are really hard)
- pillows
- clothes
- hangers
- laundry bin + detergent (unless you do the service thing)
- cleaning supplies (yep, you more than likely have to clean your own bathroom)
 - although, they do provide you with the very basics. you will learn to hate the smell of the bathroom cleaner, though.
- over-the-door coat hooks/rack - probably not enough floor space for a full-on coat rack
- trash can
- towels
- shower shoes + shower caddy
- backpack/satchel (you can try and do the cute oversized purse/tote thing but most of us give up on that come midterms...definitely bring a backpack just in case....your shoulders will thank you)

It's all really icing on the cake from there. Don't let those bed bath beyond and container store people talk you into anything you don't want.

Things that a lof of people bring but aren't absolutely necessary:

- tea kettle/coffee maker
- pictures from home
- bookshelf
- posters/decorative things
- stereo/speakers
- humidifier (it can be dry in the winter)

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What's the standard furniture in Yale rooms:

Each room usually has the following:

- bed (the height is usually adjustable so you can store things under it)
- dresser
- side table
- desk
- a closet or an armoire

Again, there's absolutely **NO overhead lighting or AC** (there is heat in the winter though).

What's the best way to handle move-in?

Nikki: I wish I had brought less stuff with me and bought more things in New Haven. If I had to do freshman year move-in again I would do/want to know this:

1. There will be a ton of people to help bring your stuff up to your room when you initially arrive...so don't worry about getting everything up to your room.
2. Pack everything in boxes or those [big storage containers](#). It's such a pain to carry individual items or small boxes and crates up. It's way more efficient if you pack things in bigger boxes/containers. I would especially pack things you plan on storing away (things that aren't for everyday use) in storage containers. It makes organizing your room so much easier. If you don't use clear boxes, consider labelling your boxes so you know what's in them. But I will say, don't make your boxes so heavy that they are impossible to carry.
3. I would also make sure things that you will need immediately (a few outfits, comforter, fan, etc) are easily accessible.
4. I would scope out your room and *then* make a run to IKEA/WALMART/TARGET for

any last minute items to bring. It can be hard to anticipate everything you need before coming to school + what will actually work for your room. Also, those blueprint things they give you guys bear little or no correlation to what your room actually looks like. It's much easier to see your space, unpack a little bit, and then buy extra storage systems or book shelves once you have an idea of what you're working with.

5. Move-in can be a little stressful/tiring. I lived on the 5th floor my freshman year so hauling everything up was, well, an experience. But all in all, move-in is usually a Yale memory you have forever. There's also tons of people to help you move-in so don't worry if it's just you coming or just you and a parent. We gotcha covered.

Andre: Move in is too much fun. Between making sure your room is fully unpacked and hanging out with your suite, though, go hang out with your suite and start the year off right. Also, be sure to say thanks to the awesome upperclassmen carrying your things for you, and maybe take a minute to meet one as well.

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How should we coordinate who brings what for our suite?

Connor: Try facebooking/email, some people don't mess with it till they get to New Haven, but that might make for a more stressful move-in day! Always remember though, Yalies come from very different cultural and financial backgrounds, so try to keep that in mind when dividing up who's bringing what!

Andre: CONNOR WAS IN MY SUITE IT WAS AWESOME.

Nikki: My freshman year suite made a google doc of all the things we needed for the suite and let people sign-up to bring things. This let people buy things at a price they were comfortable with. Also, it helps that a single person owns something as opposed to several people splitting the price of something--when/if you choose to room with different people after freshman year, it's very clear who gets what. I wouldn't worry too much about coordinating/decorating your common room. It's probably going to end up more on the side of "eclectic-chic" than "bed-bath-and-beyond-catalogue-put-together"... no matter how hard you try. This article is spot on about [expectations vs. reality](#). Oh, and the things people usually split between their suite:

- microwave (you can bring one, don't even worry about it...everyone has one)
- coffee maker/tea kettle (although, if you're an avid drinker it's probably nice to have your own)

- couch + a few chairs
- rug
- coffee table
- 2-3 lamps
- trash can (all rooms come with a recycling can)

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What did you bring too much of? What did you bring too little of?

Claire: I brought SO many school supplies. It was really unnecessary. I'd recommend only buying a few things and not buying anything in bulk. You'll figure out how you work/organize as the year goes on, and you can always buy more from the bookstore. Also, only bring books if you're definitely going to read them. They're so heavy and you will only realize how annoying it is on the day you move out.

Andre: I like to have a spiral and a folder for virtually every class (don't worry, I reuse them between semesters). Also, don't be too optimistic: your shorts will get about a month's use, and then it's time to break out the jeans.

Zaina: Way. TOO. Many. Clothes. Lots and lots of clothes.

Clare: I didn't bring enough costumes. You will need more costumes than you think!

Ira: There is a surprising amount of costumey festivities. But don't worry, if this is for you, New Haven's Salvation Army usually will suffice for finding something.

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Residential College & Resources

How does the college system operate?

Claire: There are 12 [residential colleges](#) at Yale (Davenport, Pierson, Jonathan Edwards, Branford, Saybrook, Trumbull, Calhoun, Berkley, Timothy Dwight, Silliman, Morse, and Stiles). During the summer, you are randomly assigned to one of those residential colleges. (Woohoo!!! Dport!) Because the assignment is random, all of the residential colleges have the same diversity as the university as a whole: it's like a mini-Yale community, complete with students with various backgrounds, interests, majors, and extracurricular activities.

Every residential college has a master and a dean. They are two professors that live in the residential colleges in designated houses and apartments, and together they help create a community. First, the master's role is to be the social and cultural head of the residential college, basically bringing everyone together. The master will hold regular events to accomplish this goal, such as Master's Teas where he or she invites famous people or professionals in various fields to speak to students in a small setting, usually the living room of the master's house. It doesn't matter what college you're in---anyone can go to any Master's Tea (but some of the really popular ones are limited to that college's students and maybe a few spots are raffled off to other colleges-Nikki). Second, the dean's role is to serve as the general academic advisor for all students in the residential college. He or she is available to meet with students and answer questions about classes, majors, summer fellowships/internships/research, time management skills, study tips and suggestions, and more. In Davenport, we have [Master Schottenfeld](#) and [Dean Brasseaux](#).

Residential colleges also are equipped with special facilities. Each college has a dining hall, common room, computer lab, student kitchen, music practice rooms, game room, laundry rooms, athletic facilities, library, and buttery. Many colleges also have special equipment like pottery studios, weaving studios, printing presses, basketball courts, movie theaters and more. While you do need to have someone in the college let you into their facilities, you are allowed to access all of these! Feel free to check out other colleges' facilities. Check out Davenport's facilities [here](#).

That's the basics about residential colleges. For more info, check out the Davenport College [website](#).

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What are the differences between all the advisors I have (froco, PLs, academic advisors, masters, deans, etc.)?

Shuaib: Every advisor has your best interest at heart and is excited to meet you! Your time at Yale will be expended in a variety of academic, social, cultural, culinary (etc.) spheres that your various advisors specialize in. Feel free to reach out to any of them, and especially use their specialized focus!

Generally speaking, your Frocos, dean, masters and PLs are ready and willing to answer your questions. The Frocos particularly can help you with your question or put you in touch with the right person if we cannot perfectly and immediately answer

your question.

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What type of cultural resources are there for me to take advantage of?

Nikki: There are four cultural houses and a ton of cultural clubs on campus. The four cultural centers are the [African-American Cultural Center](#), [Asian-American Cultural Center](#), [La Casa Cultural Center](#), and [The Native American Cultural Center](#). Each center operates a little bit differently, but they all sponsor lots of activities, student groups, parties, speakers, and events. They are also spaces for people to just chill. Everyone is welcome at ANY cultural house.

Additionally, you can use [this tool](#) to narrow down some cultural clubs.

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What type of resources are there for academic help?

Connor: You can find links to all of the tutoring resources [here](#).

Yale wants you to succeed and there are all kinds of free options for help. Unlike maybe in high school, there's really no stigma attached to having a tutor or asking for help. I still go to the DC writing tutor for big papers

Nikki: Tutors will save you. I went to an economics and math tutor and they and they explained things in a way that made sense. It also helped that having someone reinforce what was taught in class. There are [tutors that are available on select nights of the week](#). I would shop around, find one you like, and stick with them. If you build that relationship, they will be more likely to help you out, especially when they get busy (which they will). They can also be a godsend for solving tough problem sets. You can also apply to get your own personal tutors, which is super helpful (you have to wait until you are actually enrolled in the course though).

Zaina: Science/engineering/economics/language/and-more students-- you can get your own tutor for any of your classes! You can meet one-on-one each week- in fact, Yale College Dean's Office pays tutors for this purpose. Get tutors early - even before that first midterm. If you feel like you may need or want a tutor, speak to Dean Brasseaux so that he can recommend you. Other resources that are AWESOME: office hours (yes!), study groups(!), Science and QR tutors, and people to check your problem sets with.

Andre: I think our entire first semester orgo class would have failed if they hadn't set up a special peer tutoring team that met weekly and basically taught us how to do our homework. Sometimes tutoring isn't just helpful, but straight-up necessary.

Writing

You can get linked into all the writing centered resources [here](#).

Connor: Yale has lots tutoring options. For writing help, Davenport is lucky to have one of the best Residential College Writing Tutors. Essentially, you send him a paper/draft, he'll read it over and give you edits. You can sign up for writing tutors from any college, but seriously, Bill Storandt (DC's) is the best, though beware, these slots go fast, so try to sign up 2 weeks in advance! There's also drop-in tutoring with Grad students at the Writing Center.

Nikki: Get your essays edited by writing tutors. They will catch so many things that you can't see and their feedback is invaluable. The DC writing tutor (Bill Storandt) is fabulous, especially for more serious essays. I also LOVE the Morse writing tutor (Deborah Tenney). I think you get the most out of frequenting 1-2 writing tutors and building that relationship--they get to know your weaknesses and strengths and can really help you develop as a writer. Also--once you go to a writing tutor and establish the relationship, you can email them ahead of time to set-up an appointment....this way you can A) book an appointment earlier than a week before and B) can get the exact time slot you want/are guaranteed an appointment. This is especially useful around midterm and exam times.

Clare: Objectively speaking, Davenport's writing tutor Bill Storandt is the best. He's wonderful and helpful, and he gets booked right away. He's seriously amazing, so get on good terms! Everyone can learn from him, whether you're a writing star or don't understand how a comma works. He has told me that one thing he does is read your first paper if your high school work was in a different language (or British English, even) and you want to make sure you're aligning yourself correctly with American English.

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Foreign Languages

Connor: You can often sign up for 10 hours of [one-on-one tutoring offered by Yale's Center for Language Study](#). There's also drop-in tutoring at selected times for

Chinese, Spanish, or French speakers .

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Math/Science

Zaina: You can have a tutor assigned to you- the Yale College Dean's Office pays tutors to work with you one on one through problems and concepts. You can definitely start early with this- even before your first midterm. You can also go to the professor's office hours. This is a great way to get to know your professor and get your questions clarified. In addition, each large lecture class often has several TA's and peer tutors- these are **incredible** resources. If you go to these office hours, there will often be several other students, with whom you can form study groups. From personal experience, these will often be people you take the rest of your pre-reqs/science/engineering classes with (seriously, you will take many classes with these people since science/engineering classes work sequentially), and they may become some of your best friends! Friends who study science together (and struggle together and become library buddies) for many hours, stay together! Science love!

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What type of resources are there for non-academic help?

Nikki: There are a lot of mental health resources. SO many people use these resources. Something like 90%+ of Yalies use the mental health resources sometime during their time at Yale. Don't even sweat it. I've definitely been to Mental Health and been like "oh lord everybody is going to think I'm cray cray." Then I walked into mental health and saw like 10 people I knew. Everybody is there. Don't ever hesitate to go. We all get stressed/have issues--big or small. It's not a big deal to go to Mental Health. It's actually a really smart + brave thing to do + can help you in a lot of ways you might have never anticipated. Honestly, you will never have an opportunity to get absolutely free high quality therapy again. You should probably take advantage of that regardless.

Resources:

[Yale Mental Health](#)

This is Yale's main mental health center. You can sign up for free appointments for any reason at all. This is true whether or not you have the Yale Health Plan.

[SHARE](#)

SHARE helps students deal with sexual misconduct of all kinds. SHARE responders are

Yale University Mental Health professionals. All calls are confidential and can be anonymous.

[Walden](#)

Walden Peer Counseling is an **anonymous and confidential** hotline and walk-in peer counseling service staffed by Yale undergraduates. The hotline operates from **8pm to 8am** every night, and the office is open for walk-ins from **8pm to 1am** every night during the regular academic schedule and when classes are in session.

[Planned Parenthood](#)

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College Life & Activities

List of student groups?

<https://apps.students.yale.edu/uor/RegisteredOrganizations>

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How did you decide which activities to get involved in?

Connor: The activities fair was cool (though a bit overwhelming, be prepared for the question, “do you sing?” ten thousand times...); I personally knew a general idea of different things I thought I might want to do and chose based on my experiences with meeting the people. That’s my one big complaint about Yale: there are too many awesome activities, I wish I could do more!

Nikki: I think the most important thing is don’t be afraid to go your own way and don’t be pressured into joining any activity you don’t want to join. Also, do not be afraid to walk away from an activity you thought you would enjoy but end up hating. It is totally fine. It’s more important you do something you love than to stick with something you hate. As for picking an activity, I think people are most successful when they commit to 1-3 activities. I would kind of scope out 7-10 activities you think are up your alley before coming to school. I would go to maybe the first couples of meetings of 3-5 activities, and then pick your faves from there. Just be wary of stretching yourself too thin! Also, you can just make up your own activities and volunteer independently of an official Yale group. I needed to make my own volunteering schedule so I just work directly with an organization--sometimes you

might not need an official club/activity to do what you want to do.

Claire: The activities bazaar is a cool thing. Also check out websites! I'd say make a list of the things you want to check out, and just start going to events! You don't have to commit to anything the second you arrive on campus, so scope things out and figure out what you might think is fun. One last piece of wisdom: stop resume building NOW. You should join and participate in activities because they are fun and because you care about them, not because they will help you get a job... because they probably won't. (Most of the graduates I talk to say that being president of their such-and-such club didn't help them get jobs. That's anecdotal evidence, of course, but keep it in mind when you start dreading your weekly meetings. If you don't love what you're doing, don't do it.)

Andre: Spend a lot of time at the activities bazaar. I had an idea of what I was interested in based on my high school activities, but I also discovered some brand new activities just by wandering around (Yale ballroom dancing? Didn't stick with it long-term, but I was certainly not expecting to do that my freshman year). There's so much to do here, you really ought to be spending your time doing what you love to do. One caveat, though: white space in your calendar is important. It's great to be involved, but don't spend so much time running around that you don't take enough time for your friends. I've made that mistake, and even though I loved every activity I still looked back on that semester with regret. (Claire: Ohmygossshhh, couldn't agree more with the importance of white space on your calendar. Make time for people because there are so many awesome people at Yale.)

[More about the activities bazaar.](#)

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What's leadership at Yale like?

Andre: Good leadership means being committed to your activity, and also being smart enough to delegate to the rest of your team. You'll find a variety of leadership activities, from being President or Chair of something to being a tutor or a mentor or a captain. Lots of people come into Yale expecting to be a leader, but stop worrying about it. Within a few months (or a couple years) you'll figure out what it is you truly feel requires your energy, and that will be there area in which you end up becoming a leader.

Clare: Pick several activities your freshman year, because by sophomore/junior year you'll want to have one or two that you love enough to lead. Leadership is great training for later in

life and employers/grad schools want it - so find something you love.

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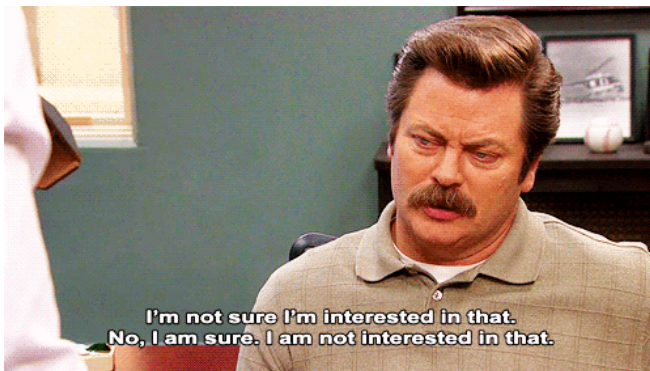
How do you navigate that big old activities fair?

Connor: Wander around, pick up some cool brochures, maybe join an email list or two, but don't feel bad saying no thanks! -

Andre: Just keep on walking. Seriously, at least glance at every single poster. You never know what you could find interesting. But just because you stopped or talked to someone, doesn't mean you need to put yourself on their email sheet. Go in wanting to be interested in things, and not afraid to try something new. (remember, though: the fair is huge, but there are still activities not represented there)

Zaina: Gather candy for energy. Ask for contact information if you are really, really interested in something, but don't get too caught up in remembering everything, because the organizations you sign up for will email you! A month into school, feel free to unsubscribe from a panlist if you are no longer interested.

Nikki: Brace yourself for the pandemonium and just take it all in. It doesn't really matter if you make it to the booth of every activity you're interested in. You can usually find their contact information online (if not, your froco can totally get you linked in with the coordinators). Just look at things that sound interesting and don't take it too seriously. I generally felt like this...



But I <3 all the activities I do at Yale now. Just relax and accept it for what it is--a crazy + hectic Yale tradition.

Claire: First, DO NOT to put your email down on a gazillion lists simply because they ask you to. Only put your name down on an email list if you genuinely want to

receive email from that group... because you will receive email, and it gets annoying. Second, talk to people! The activities bazaar is supposed to be a chance for you to get more information about the group, and a huge part of that is whether you feel like you can make a connection with the group members. Make friends!

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Laundry. Tell me about that.

A few options for Laundry:

1. Do it yourself. It's cheap and easy.. Here's how to do that:
 - a. Buy detergent and dryer sheets. You can get these at Walgreen's, Rite Aid, Stop&Shop, or even at the back of the Yale Bookstore near the coffee.
 - b. Separate your laundry into whites and colors.
 - c. Bring your laundry to the basement of Bingham -- right next to Welch!
 - d. Put your laundry into a machine.
 - e. Put detergent into the little pull-out compartment, usually on the left of the machines.
 - f. Most of the machines now accept credit cards/debit cards. There should be a little computer-box on one of the walls. Click through the options, selected the machine(s) that you're using, and then follow the directions to pay for it and start the machine.
 - g. Go to the machine and select the option that you want. It should say "Whites," "Colors," "Bright Colors," and "Delicates." Something like that.
 - h. Set an alarm on your watch/phone, and COME BACK AND GET YOUR LAUNDRY OR IT WILL GET DUMPED.
 - i. Once it's out of the washer, put in the dryers nearby. Make sure you clean the lint trap at the front, and add a dryer sheet to the load. Use the computer again to pay for the dryer to start, and select your setting (I always use whites and colors). If you fold them the second they're out of the dryer, your clothes won't be wrinkled.
 - j. Also, you'll spend about \$3 on every load of laundry (wash and dry cycle), if you're a good person and do your laundry every two weeks that's about \$50 bucks a year-Nikki
2. Get a laundry service--most who decide to do a laundry service use MVP Campus Laundry. It's a little pricey, but it will save a little time.
 - a. Sign up [online](#). It's listed as \$535 for the year right now.

- b. Drop your laundry off at one of the MVP locations. The closest is in the basement of Farnam, another one of the dorms on Old Campus.
- c. You'll get your laundry back in 2 business days as long as you drop your laundry off by 10 a.m., Monday-Friday.

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What about TV? How can I watch my shows?

Nikki: So some people bring TVs to their suites. I think a lot of guys do this so they can play their video games or whatever. Yale also has a [basic cable package available](#) in all the suites and you can upgrade to the expanded one.

But, all Yalies have free access to [Tivli](#) which is an online cable streaming service--so basically you can stream live TV to your computer. And if you have an [HDMI cable](#) or apparently, [this new thing from Google](#), you can just connect your computer to your TV and save mad money.

Also, I think once you have some close friends it can be nice for each person to pay for a single subscription service, if that makes sense. My best friend has our HBO GO subscription so we can watch Game of Thrones. I have our Hulu-Plus subscription mainly for New Girl and Grey's Anatomy (although we are starting to think Hulu-Plus is a sham since you still have to sit through commercials and the only true benefit is you get access to some shows sooner and for longer). My sister pays for our Netflix subscription. The three of us just share all of our subscriptions services and it's fine + fairly cheap. But, there are also much cheaper but less reliable ways of finding the shows you want to watch....

Oh, and a lot of people watch TV in The Dive. There's a sizeable TV down there and seating for a bunch of people so if it's must-see-TV there will people down there watching that...and you can always find people watching Jeopardy.

Basically, don't worry. There are a thousand ways to get access to TV shows if you want them.

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What's bursar?

Bursar allows you to buy things via your Yale account. You will be charged for them on your Yale statement.

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How do I get linked into all of UCS resources/what resources does UCS have?

Zaina: Get on [Undergraduate Career Service's](#) email lists! The office often hosts workshops and lectures to help students search for jobs, write resumes, write cover letters, give interviews, and GET JOBS. The office also provides counseling for jobs, and provides resources for resume reviews and mock interviews. If you explore the UCS website for a half hour/hour, you will be able to join the UCS list - which means you get a newsletter once a week with new job postings and job-search advice tailored to your profile (you can fill in your interests on eRecruiting). You may or may not be interested in getting a job right away, but either way, you'll be in the loop about the way job searches happen on campus. UCS is a great resource- for internships, term-time jobs, and jobs after Yale.

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How can I find on-campus jobs + what jobs have you worked?

Zaina: [Yale student jobs](#). Also, talk to your Master if you are interested in being a Master's Aid. Some of the cultural centers also hire students, as do the libraries and many labs. Yale Student Jobs should have the listings up!

Here's what we've done during our time here. Feel free to reach out to any of us about our jobs!

Andre: I was a Master's aide if you want to talk to me about it.

Shuaib: I worked as a Peer Liaison for two years with the Chaplain's office. Something to check out at the end of the year!

Claire: I have worked as an usher for the Repertory Theater and a Tour Guide since my freshman year.

Zaina: I have been conducting research as a Bouchet Fellow since second semester sophomore year.

Nikki: I worked for two married European History Professors (at their house) my freshman year and learned a lot about Poland + adorable babies. I've worked at a digital ad firm in NYC since fall of sophomore year. Hit me up if you wanna know about the job scene in NYC.

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What's the religious scene like at Yale?

Here's a comprehensive [list of all the services](#) at Yale and the greater community. There's a lot of different services + groups at Yale and usually you just have to try a bunch and see what works/doesn't work for you.

The [Chaplain's Office](#) is a great resource for spiritual and religious life at Yale. They are also located right on old campus and have a case of free ice-cream that you are always welcome to grab from .

Connor: The religious scene at Yale is pretty diverse, and the Chaplain's office will definitely help point you in the right direction based on what you're looking for! Also, it's right near Welch, and they have ice cream in case you needed additional incentive.

Zaina: There are communities for you to be a part of if you are interested in them! We have different religious services, and any day of the week something religious or spirituality related is happening on campus.

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Can you explain what a cappella rush is?

Claire: Rush! The term "rush" refers to the weeks in which auditions and call-backs occur for a cappella at the beginning of the fall semester in September. There are a couple of other events that happen.

1. Woolsey Concert: every group will perform a few songs. It's really long and always packed. You don't have to go for all or even part of it. (My freshman year, I only saw the first few groups perform and then left. haha) Last I heard this would be on Sunday, August 25.
2. Dwight Concert (usually on a Friday night): every group performs a few songs again. After the Dwight Concert, you sign up for whatever groups you're interested in "rushing" (meaning, trying out for). Probably Wednesday, August 28.
3. The first auditions happen that weekend. Each group's auditions are different, and usually they'll give you an idea of what the auditions will be on their websites or in their audition packets that they'll give you when you

sign-up. To answer your question about reading music, I barely read music, and I've been absolutely fine. Some people in my group don't read it at all.

4. After the audition, you may be invited on a "rush meal," which is meant to be a chance for you to get to know the group members in the following week. You eat a meal with a few of the other members in a dining hall---it's really casual and fun!
5. Each group also has a "singing dessert." It's a full-out concert so that auditionees can get a better sense of the repertoire and style of the group. (They also almost always serve delicious desserts.)
6. Call-backs happen soon after the singing desserts, and they're basically the same as auditions. The group will tell you what they will ask you to do in the call-back.
7. Tap night will happen during the week after call-backs. (The night that it happens is "secret" but people always figure it out.) The groups will "tap" the auditionee (invite the singer to be part of the group) by running to their dorms and singing to them. A singer that gets "tapped" can say yes, no, or maybe, and he/she DOES NOT have to answer the invitation at that time.

WHEW THAT'S A LOT. I probably missed something, but luckily there are a few great resources to answer all of your questions. (1) The Yale Singing Group Council [website](#). They have all of the rules and info about rush on there. (2) Rush managers. Each group elects a few members to serve as "rush managers." They are the only members of the group that are allowed to have lengthy conversations with you outside of the context of a rush meal. You should feel free to contact them with any and all questions you have about rush, the group, life in general, or whatever! (3) Each group's website. Groups want you to have all of the information you need, so check their websites!

So all-in-all, it's a crazy process that can be exciting, confusing, frustrating, and/or exhausting. If you decide to rush, my best advice is take it as a fun way to get to know a few upperclassmen and remember... it's just a cappella. haha

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How do people go abroad?

Claire: I studied abroad in Spain the fall semester of my junior year. I can tell you about that experience in detail if you're interested! What I can tell you is that I found the Yale CIPE website pretty helpful. They've also reworked it, so it should be even easier to navigate. Check it [out](#)!

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What are the resources for LGBTQ life at Yale?

The [Office of LGBTQ Resources](#) resources can help you connect to others in the community and learn about other social, cultural, and academic programs, and events. They basically know everything and anything and are a good place to start!

Ira: Yes, use all of those resources. I just want to add that I think of the Yale community as a resource too. You can't find a more open and accepting community. This is especially true by the time people are upperclassmen. If you go to Yale, you're surrounded by LGBT students- it's hard to maintain prejudice.

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What's the social scene like?

Nikki: There's something for everyone. If you're about that party life there are parties in people's suites...and different colleges, frats, and groups host their own parties fairly often. These can be hit or miss but you will know through the grapevine if something's going to be good. There is also Wednesday night and Saturday night [Toad's](#). Toad's is Yale's dance club. It can be awesomely fun...especially on Wednesday nights when it's Yale students only. Saturday nights it can be kinda sketch/empty or it can be good....again, you'll probably know through the grapevine or you will show up and just know that you need to leave. Or you can just not care and do whatever you want to do at Toad's because it's Toad's.

There's also a lot to do outside of the party scene. Every Friday and Saturday night at Dwight Hall on Old Campus there's Global Grounds--a chill space with board games and snacks (anyone is welcome to get snacks btw even if you're going to bounce). Also, it's nice to just talk with friends...especially when the weather gets cold...or just binge watch something on Netflix--another extremely valid option. Another great thing to do is take advantage of all the nearby arts. [The Yale Rep](#) has some fantastic plays with discounted prices for students (Colleges will often sponsor nearly free trips too). You could also probably fill up all your night's at Yale by going to your friends art showing/a capella show/play/spoken word performance/comedy performance/recital/whatever else people do. It's also really fun to take the train into NYC (about a 1.5 hr train ride), explore, hit your NYU friends up for cheap tickets to shows, picnic in central park, be a hipster in Brooklyn...whatever floats your boat.

One of my favorite things about Yale is how our social scene operates. There's good

and bad, but for the most part people are pretty accepting of whatever you want to do socially. You want to go out? Great. You want to stay in and catch-up on sleep? Totes fine. Need to finish that paper that's due in 4 hrs? Yeah, you should get on that. It's all good. If anyone pressures you into anything (and you'll know the difference between i-want-to-be-friends-so-come-out-with-me pressure and i-think-you're-lame-for-not-partying pressure), it usually means they are insecure about their social life + self. Don't even worry about it. Do what you please.

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Preparing for Yale

What's a print account/should I bring a printer?

Nikki: I once had a printer, but it took up too much space. I now just use the printer around the libraries, since I'm usually there when I need to print anyways. To print at Yale, you need to set up a print account. You can learn to do that [here](#), but just wait until you actually get to campus. Also, if you bring a printer everyone is always going to be hitting you up to use that printer. (Although, my roommate has had a printer all four years and thinks it's wonderful. I also shamelessly asked to use her printer on occasion which annoyed her, and she still thought it was worth it...so there's that)

Andre: I second Nikki. Don't bother with a printer.

Ira: I agree that a printer is not necessary at all. And printing on Yale printers lets you print double sided. That being said, I do have one, and it sometimes it is nice to be able to print in your own room (and you can do what I do and just not talk to any of your suitemates about the printer. I'm a great person. Oh...future FroCo suitemates- I no longer have my printer)

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How do I get regular mail? Like letters and packages?

You have to register for a PO Box with USPS. The post office is right on old campus. The instructions are [here](#). Everyone probably would recommend doing the 12 month one because it's less hassle. People usually just do the 6 month thing if they are going abroad and the 3 month thing if they are only there for the summer.

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Can I merge my Yale and Gmail (or other inferior e-mail services) Accounts?

Definitely sync your email to one account. It can be such a hassle to toggle between two accounts and it makes you so much more likely to miss important e-mails. You can get [awesome directions for that here](#).

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Should I bring a bike?

Andre: buy a longboard!

Connor: The bike question was the only question I had for my froco (get it Kevin Beckford!) before school as well. I decided not to take my bike because it was pretty new and I wasn't used to riding "in the city" (of New Haven) and have not really regretted it (particularly since the closest thing I've had up science hill is TD's annex, Rosenfeld or something...). I am really excited about the new bike share program however. You pay \$20 once and can always rent a bike for a day with no further cost (you can even get your 20 back by doing a one hour bike safety course).

Shuaib: Bike- a must-have in my opinion. Craigslist has bikes available, though I just bought mine from the walmart in new haven. Was easier than shipping it over.

Zaina: I have a zagster account since I am in New Haven this summer, and it's really easy and convenient to use! You literally send a text with the bike number, and the lock code is texted back to you within a few seconds. Then you can be on your way. It's really convenient. My one concern is that there might not be enough bikes to go around when everyone gets here, since we're still in the pilot stage.

Ira: Yes! Having a bike will redefine New Haven for you. So much more becomes easily accessible. The far becomes near, long treks become short. Seriously, I love having a bike. I got mine pretty inexpensively from craigslist. But this new bike share thingy seems cool and might make owning a bike not practical.

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What's the deal with computers?

Connor: I got a PC because they say it's 50%, but I think that's a bogus stat (more macs!) and definitely wish I'd gone with the mac-daddy.

Andre: I have a hp pavilion dm4 that's served me really well since college started. I would tell them to look for size more than anything else: get something with a small screen since you're more likely to take it places that way. The apple store is really, really nice for Mac users as long as they're willing to pay out the nose for repairs.

Zaina: I chose a 17" PC that weighs almost a ton. I didn't have any concept of the need for mobility for our huge (but walkable) campus. I love my computer because it can do anything with its 6GB of RAM, but sadly I don't take it places/use it nearly enough. I think this is a case in which less would have been more. I, like Connor, think maybe a Mac would've been a better idea (especially with all the note taking, calendar syncing abilities and lightweight body). That being said, I've also been fine with my PC, and so have a lot of other people.

Nikki: I switched from a PC to Mac in the middle of my freshman year. So happy about it. I'll never be about that PC life again. I think the most important thing is that it needs to be portable. You do not want to lug a heavy computer around. Also, if you get a Mac it never really breaks. I've spilled all types of liquids on it, crumbs, dropped it don't a flight of stairs (twice), cracked my screen, download tons of things from in the interwebz, and basically taken really crappy care of it (don't be a mac owner like me. I'm a terrible example) and it's still functioning like new. I had PCs growing up and if I even looked at them wrong they would break. Macs are such troopers. If you do get a Mac be sure to get a case. It's worth the investment.

FYI: In-between the time I broke my PC and saved up enough for a Mac (basically all freshman year spring semester), I just used the computer clusters in the library. I was actually way more productive doing this because A) I had no computer which meant I had no way for the internet/gchat to distract me from taking notes in class and B) When you sit at the computer clusters everybody can see what you're doing so you're more likely to stay focused and less likely to be on buzzfeed. So if you don't want to bring a computer, it's going to be a little bit more difficult (you might have to get to the clusters early to scope out a good one, but there are usually more than enough computers to go around...especially in the bigger libraries) but you can definitely do it.

Also, I experimented this past semester. You can definitely save yourself a solid grand if you just buy an iPad + the Office Aps (but really at this point you can just use google docs) + an iPad keyboard. I used this system and it was super portable + much cheaper than if I had invested in a computer + I could use my iPad for games and as an e-reader when it wasn't functioning as a computer. Oh, and if you get tired of the iPad style you can always hop on a computer @ the library. I sort of regret not just buying an iPad (but hey, I'm old, they weren't really a thing when I went to college), saving all that money or using it to do something fun, and being done with it.

Ira: I'm happy with my PC thank you very much. It's some basic Lenovo computer that I have had since high school (yes, without breaking it, Nikki).

I apologize for my tone. The truth is I have an admittedly irrational prejudice against macs. I think it's because it's the computer my school had when I was in 5th grade, and 5th grade wasn't my favorite year, and subconsciously I link them. So maybe just ignore me.

But also it's really not necessary to get a mac. It's really not.

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What are the most convenient banks?

Connor: There are lots of Bank of America ATMs all over campus. There's also a TD bank right across the street from Welch Hall and a Wells Fargo close by. Here's a [list of all the banks](#) near campus and their locations. However, if you don't want to change banks, you don't have to. I never changed banks from BB&T (which doesn't exist in New Haven), but I made it work by just using the \$20 cash back option when you check out from Walgreens. It was inconvenient, but I made it work.

Andre: some banks also have surcharge-free atms: check your bank's website for ATMs around New Haven (zip 06520) before you make the switch, if ATMs are all you're worried about. Also, I just set up mobile checking on my phone; now I can deposit checks even though my closest bank branch is a good 300 miles away from school.

Ira: There's also a pretty convenient Chase bank.
(I'm clearly contributing to this document in important ways)

Nikki: Also, download your bank's app. For most banks, you can now deposit checks from your phone...which really helps.

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What are the breaks and holiday schedules?

Zaina: Breaks for 2013-2014: [here they are!](#) If you are considering flying/driving/bussing/train-riding home, you might consider making travel arrangements early. Tickets can get expensive really fast.

Also, the train station is walkable from campus but most people take a cab (about a \$7) ride. You can also take the [Yale Shuttle](#) for free and there's a New Haven run shuttle that is free too and drops off pretty close to Welch.

Most people use the [CT Limo](#) to get from/to the airport. (or take a taxi to union station, a train to grand central, and then a train to the airport. I'm cheap, don't judge me)

Andre: I walk every time, but it definitely gets seedy close to the train station. Don't walk there your first time and don't be a hero and go walking when you know you shouldn't (aka later hours of the day, times when it looks like you have something that could get taken away from you reasonably easily, etc)

Zaina: FYI: Some Yale groups organize trips during breaks (when the time comes, you will hear about these opportunities). If you are staying on campus, have no fear-- many people stay here over breaks, and Davenport often puts together a get-together for people staying here. For the last two years, Davenport sent us to Thanksgiving Dinner at The Study. Breaks can be a great time to go home and chillax, but if you're not going home or going on a trip, you can also meet people who are staying here (and chillax too). -Zaina

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Important Dates

Nikki: Here are some important dates for the semester. I would definitely look over the [Calendar for Opening Days](#) so you know what activities you've got going on your first few weeks here.

Pre-orientation start dates:

CC: August 17th-22nd

FOOT: August 17-23 (six-day) or August 19-23 (four-day)

Harvest: August 18th-23rd

OIS: August 19th-23rd

Move-In: August 23rd (beginning at 9AM)

Camp Yale/Orientation: August 23rd-August 27th

First Day of Classes: August 28th

Activities Bazaar: September 1st (12-3PM)

End of Shopping Period/Your Schedule is Due: September 9th

Family Weekend: September 27-29 (this is a weekend where parents are invited to come to campus. almost every student group will have some sort of performance and Yale will host a lot of activities your parents will be into)

Last Day to Drop A Class (without getting a W for withdrawal on your transcript): October 18th

Last Day to Withdraw from a Class: December 6th (you'll get a W on your transcript though)

Beginning of Reading Week: December 6th

Beginning of Exams: December 12th

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When should I order my textbooks? Should I do it now?

Connor: No, because of shopping period, you don't know your classes so therefore it'd be hard to order your books (though this may seem weird since all your friends with normal class-registration at other schools will all have their books). I generally buy the first book or two that I need from the bookstore and then order the rest cheaper from Amazon. If you don't mind paying a little more and don't want to have to worry about it, you can also order them all from the bookstore. Also, if you don't want to keep your books, use the Yale library! Even if it's checked out of the Yale library, you can use [borrow direct](#) (borrow direct is amazing, btw, use it) where you can essentially get the book from any Ivy League library.

Zaina: **For science students:** you will probably need your textbook very early in the semester (if you already know you are a reading the textbook kind of person). If you are taking chemistry or math, for example, you will definitely need to avoid falling behind because you don't have a textbook. Science classes move kind of fast, in my opinion (Andre, Shuaib, any comments?), so you really need something to study from outside of class. Some professors assign problem sets from the book in the first week or two of class. I'd say that as soon as you decide to take a science class, you should strongly consider buying/borrowing a book. As Nikki says below, if it's an emergency, you can buy your book from the bookstore, order used on Amazon/find someone who has a used book, then return the bookstore book.

Nikki: I would highly recommend waiting to buy your books. What you're taking might

vary drastically from the time you step on campus to the time shopping week ends.

So there are a couple of different ways I like to play this:

1. Renting books: This has saved me a few bucks. I like Chegg.com. You can also rent directly from the Yale Bookstore.

2. Rent-Buy-Return: So this is a little trickier, but has saved me mad money in the past. So after shopping period, you may need a book immediately. I usually buy it at the bookstore (or bursar, that way you don't have to actually spend any cash). I then find the book for way cheaper on Amazon/Chegg (just make sure you are looking for used books on Amazon). When my book from Amazon arrives, I just return the book to bookstore and get my money back. You usually have a week or a week and half to return books to the bookstore. Also, I usually sell books back to Amazon after the semester ends to make some more money.

3. [Yale Book Exchange](#): I've never done this but I know people who have. You can buy books on the cheap at the book exchange. Just go early and often so you can get your pick. Also, bonus points, because it benefits charity.

4. Online + print: You can find a lot of books online either as downloadable PDFs or as Google Books. If you hate reading things on the computer, you can usually print them out for \$10-\$30. Way cheaper than you would have paid for the book.

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What is Camp Yale like?

Nikki: Freshman Year Camp Yale (Camp Yale is the time in between you get to campus and when classes actually start) is a blur of mandatory meetings, organizing your life, and blue booking. Every year after that, it's just a ton of fun...in whatever way you choose to have it :) Next year, there will definitely be a lot of reuniting with friends you haven't seen + laying in the dport hammock (yep, we have a hammock. it's amazing) + trying to create the a schedule with all the classes you want and a five-day weekend (it's the stuff of legends but it has been done.) But as for this first year, just take it as it comes. It's a lot but it's also full of memories you'll have forever. Also...there's mad free food. It's everywhere.

Ira: A cautionary note about Freshman year Camp Yale. Many people will tell you it's

the best thing ever. And like Nikki said, in subsequent years it really is wonderful. And it'll be a lot of fun for you all too! But as a Freshman, I would not expect to be spending each night at the best party of your life, even if that's what you're looking for. The thing is, many of you will be just starting to figure out the social scene. Don't be surprised if you end up in a pack of 30 freshmen you don't know that well yet, heading to some party that is so crowded with other packs of freshmen that you decide to leave and go somewhere else, only to find the next party to be just as uncomfortably crowded.

The thing I think is great about freshman year camp yale is that Yale is new and scary to everyone, so everyone is super nice. You will meet many many people. You will get the phone numbers of many people that you will never call again. But because everyone's in the same boat-- going out with people you don't know is more comfortable than you might expect. (My introversion is clearly coming across I think. You social butterflies will have a blast).

My favorite memory from Camp Yale 2010 is somehow ending up in someone's suite with a couple other people I didn't know well. We just sat around for a few hours and talked. Genuine conversation. Camp Yale can be a rush of superficial introductions and many meetings. But it's also just the very beginning of your Yale experience. Those moments of genuine connection and deep conversation can be had during Camp Yale, even if they are rare. And when everything settles down, I think you'll find those moments to be the more indicative introduction to Yale than most of the craziness of Camp Yale.

And of course-- the mandatory FroCo meetings! We, at least, are excited about those!

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How bad are the winters? Should I buy a hat or something?

Nikki: CT weather and winters can be rough. I'm from Virginia and was not fully prepared for the cold. I tried to work it with a cute light coat my frosh winter because I was trying to be stylish and it's a wonder I didn't catch the plague. You definitely need to invest in a heavy winter coat, hats, and gloves. You should also have boots you can wear in the snow. Yale rarely cancels classes due to snow (I know, it's the worst), so be prepared to be in it. You'll also probably be outside more than in HS because you have to walk to and from classes.

I also had no concept of a winter wardrobe before I came to Yale. It's wise to have things to layer with, jackets, sweaters, scarves, leggings, etc. It can get cold and some point just

swapping out jeans for shorts isn't going to cut it.

Also, YOU NEED RAIN BOOTS or waterproof shoes. New Haven does this (stupid) thing where we don't have drains on the street...so the water just sits there. Sad I know. Bring rain boots or just get really good at jumping over large, lake-like puddles. I didn't have rain boots last year and it's doable to not have them but it is so much more convenient if you do...you'll also ruin less shoes.

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Pre-Med People Things

What are the pre-med requirements?

Andre: Ok, the requirements for being a premed may seem somewhat unreasonable (more due to the extracurriculars than the required classes). In some ways, they are. But, hundreds of kids manage it every year, and we enjoy ourselves plenty along the way. You can, too.

You can divide the requirements up into two big groups: classes and extracurriculars.

Classes:

One year of chemistry, with lab: I took the chem 114,115 sequence (basic chemistry) along with the associated lab. For you chem kids, you may take chem 116 and its lab (only 1 semester), and then you'll need to take biochem (not bad) and its lab (pretty intense) to fill the second semester. For the super chemistry kids, you will end up beginning with freshman orgo, in which case I believe you take physical chemistry(or a year of biochemistry) to fulfill the requirement

One year of organic chemistry, with lab: freshman orgo or general orgo. People who go into orgo with a bad attitude hate it; if not, you'll be ok. Do yourself a favor, though, and read reviews: some of these professors want you to have a great time, and others want to show you why not everyone is an organic chemist. Opt for the former, if you can.

One year of physics, with lab: I took this along with orgo my sophomore year. There are many physics tracks depending on your background; I enjoyed physics but didn't want to take the high-level math so I took physics 180 and 181. There is also a physics for pre-meds (170/171) that is at the same level; but I've generally not heard good things. There is also a 200 level sequence if you're into linear algebra, and an even higher level sequence if your backup career is astrophysics. Another way to do this is

to take physics over the summer. [I think now they have physics 150/151 offered in the summer, which can take out the stress of doubling up on sciences or core classes later -ZZ]

One year of biology, (you guessed it) with labs: Now, Yale has recently created a 100-104 sequence that takes care of this requirement. These aren't awful, but if you happen to have an ap bio score that can get you out of these, there are many interesting and rewarding classes at the upper level. **But are you applying to Texas schools?** If so, you also need a second year of bio (that's 4 credits total), but this second year doesn't need to be with labs. You can do these two years at the same time (I did that), and Biochem can count as one of those 4 bios.

One year of English Schools tend to vary somewhat on this, but nearly all of the schools require any class taught by the English department. I took two literature classes. If you like to write or want to improve, take a writing-specific one like ENGL 114 or 120, but it's not strictly required

(Up to) one year of Math: this can be fulfilled by a number of classes. You ought to take up through MATH 115 (or the engineering equivalent), but anything beyond that is your prerogative. Schools require either a semester of calc, a semester of stats, or both; I took one of calc and one of stats and have been fine for every school I applied for.

Extracurriculars

These range from being highly encouraged to completely mandatory based on where you're applying. But don't worry, you don't have to throw yourself into everything. Find a couple of things that you're passionate about, and there will be a couple of things that you do to simply check the box and move on. It's not bad, it's just necessary -- get what you can out of the experience, enjoy yourself, and focus more time on the activities that you genuinely enjoy.

Shadowing: Medical schools like to see that you've followed a doctor, resident, or fellow around. It's fun to do. I would recommend spending less time following more people rather than extended shadowing of a single physician, since you are really there to learn more about the lifestyle and how they interact with patients than the actual medicine they're practicing. That's what med school's for. Don't be scared to email people to ask, and do ask them questions while you're there. Yale-New Haven hospital has lots of shadowing, you can contact doctors at home during the summer,

and many summer experiences have a shadowing component built in. Yale Medical Professions Outreach, a student organization, also organizes physician and resident shadowing positions every semester.

Clinical Experience: This is actually different from shadowing; people will complete this “soft requirement” in various ways. You can work in a hospital in an untrained position, you can intern somewhere, you could volunteer at a hospice, translate for a free clinic (I did that), work as a scribe, or get trained as an EMT (lots of work to do the training, but the job is supposed to be very cool). I would recommend looking into this and talking with Zaina, Shuaib, or me, since this can be a great way for you to see medicine as it’s practiced and can be a good way to determine if you actually like medicine.

Research: Maybe you spent all of high school volunteering at NIH. I didn’t. Research can be bench research, it can be research at the med school, it can be data collection for a nutrition company, or it can be unrelated (I work in a psychology lab). For me, this has been a pretty minor part of college life -- I’m just not that into research. For others, like Zaina, research has been a huge part of their experience. I would keep your ears perked freshman year, but don’t necessarily throw yourself into a lab freshman year if you’re not ready for it/interested. Something will come along, I promise. [Zaina says, if you are looking for a lab, let me know so we can talk about it, but of course, don’t feel the need to commit to this if you don’t want to!]

Leadership: Sounds stressful, right? Don’t worry about it. You probably won’t be in any leadership positions freshman year, and you’ll probably be a little bit too responsible for how something runs by the time you’re a sophomore or junior. Relax, do activities that you enjoy, and somehow you’ll end up leading something by the time you’ve applied to schools. Leadership doesn’t necessarily mean being a president, either: please don’t resume pad, don’t jump at the first position offered to you, and have the confidence to be a leader when the time is right.

Note: law schools want leadership too, so read this paragraph even if you will never set foot in a lab!!!

Community service: Medical schools like people who like people. Hopefully, you like people, too. There are a ton of ways to serve the community in many different fields, from helping small businesses to tutoring schoolchildren to working in a free clinic to helping residents with their taxes to improving mental health on campus. I’m probably going to soapbox here, but please don’t get so caught up in yourself that you forget the world you live in. Service is awesome. At the same time, there are so many

chances to serve that you really can find one that you're excited about rather than one that comes across as a job.

It seems overwhelming as a list, but I promise you can do it. Everyone does different requirements at different levels, and you'll find the mix that works for you. Keep in mind, too, that being pre-med is different than practicing medicine. If you love the thought of being a doctor but hate the thought of chemistry, suck it up: two years of chemistry is worth doing what you love for 30 years down the road.

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What's your experience being pre-med? Any suggestions for someone thinking about it or how to pursue that early in your Yale career?

Solid steps to answer the second part of the question:

- 1) Get on the [Health Professions Advisory](#) panlist, and explore the website.
- 2) [Get on the Yale Medical Professions Advisory](#) (YMPO) panlist
- 3) Start your chemistry sequence and/or other pre-req sequence first semester.
- 4) Go to lectures that interest you, do some volunteer work that interests you, or shadow a physician (through YMPO) to see what it's like.
- 5) Talk to a pre-med advisor at Yale Health Professions Advisory.
- 6) Your friendly FroCo Zaina was super involved with YMPO, so if you have any questions, feel free to email her ([me](#)).
- 7) Your other friendly FroCos Andre and Shuaib are premed and have probably done some pre-med-style extracurriculars (Andre: if you speak Spanish or Bengali or Arabic pretty well, volunteering as an interpreter at HAVEN free clinic was incredible) -ZZ

Andre: If you complain, you're going to have a terrible time. There is always going to be someone to complain with, and you'll end up feeling hopeless. If you walk into your classes feeling like there's something new and exciting to be learned, they cease to be requirements and start to be ways to explore your world. I've honestly loved fulfilling the pre-med requirements and I've really enjoyed my time here. You will certainly have to work, but there's just no need to be stressed out about it. Enjoy yourself -- have a social life, sit down and work when you need to, and then go enjoy your friends -- and you really will be fine when it comes to applying to schools. In a lot of ways, being pre-med is like double majoring, so do be careful of taking a lot of random "exploration" classes since at the end of the day you need to complete both the premed requirements and your eventual major requirements by the time you graduate. Honestly, attitude is huge, as is knowing how to relax.

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General Advice

Anything you recommend doing before I head off to school?

Nikki: Relax. Catch up on sleep. Chill out. Reflect a little bit about what you want to get out of the next year and where you wanna be 365 days from the start of school. But seriously, sleep.

Zaina: Read a book for pleasure. I know people who make time to read books for pleasure during the school year, but I haven't been so successful with that. Also, make a list of three-ish things that you want to do before the end of the year!

Andre: work out with your parents how often you're calling home. I call like once/1.5 weeks; I have a friend who calls several times a day.

Clare: Spend some time outdoors. New Haven is a city, and you'll miss the woods.

Ira: Get a calendar and count down the days until you get to meet your FroCo.

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What was the best piece of advice you received freshman year?

Andre: well, my dad reminded me that I do need to get a job once I graduate. This one's controversial, but please don't be so busy finding yourself that you lose all practicality. On another note, you are surrounded by people that are incredibly cool. If Yale were all about making the best grade possible, it would be taught online. Stay up late talking to your suitemates, invest in relationships with people in your extracurriculars, and talk to your friends to see if they're doing anything really cool that you'd like to try, too. At this point, I think that all but two of my extracurriculars are things that I heard about from a friend.

WAIT! number one piece of advice: **think about what is truly important to you.** If you don't make time for it in college, you probably won't make time for it later. Start practicing the art of carving out time for the things you love or the things you need.

Nikki: Sleep. Don't be like this:



But seriously....you really need to sleep. When you sleep well everything is just better. Problem sets become clear. TAs become less annoying. Writer's block disappears. Just commit to sleeping. [Here](#) are all the reasons you need to sleep.

Also, remember that you will learn just as much, if not more, outside of the classroom. Yale classes are awesome, but you will learn so much from the people you interact with (even the one's who aren't your cup of tea). Just don't get so caught up in performing academically that you miss out on Yale.

Oh and make as much money off Yale as humanly possible. Apply for fellowships. Take trips funded by Yale. Sign-up for dinners with the speakers Yale brings in. Go to all the Yale-funded cultural dinners. Apply for grants. Use each and every single resource that interests you. MAKE YO MONEY BACK. You'll also have so many incredible experiences along the way.

Claire: If you're going out with friends, go with the "come together, leave together" rule of thumb. It's really important to have a plan and look out for each other. Another piece of advice that I wish I had received: hang out with people OUTSIDE OF MEALTIMES. You don't just have to "get meals" with people in order to form friendships with them. In fact, making plans outside of mealtimes has led me to far more meaningful experiences. Do it.

Clare: This is four years to do exactly what you love the most. Find it. It's okay to start over sophomore or junior year socially, academically, extra-curricularly - the stakes are low and the rewards are high. You'll make a mistake and you'll survive! Keep chasing what you love.

Ira: You deserve to be here. You deserve to be here. It's worth saying more than

twice. Yale is full of incredible people who have done many incredible things- and these people are quite visible. Many students here start to feel bad about themselves because they cannot solve complex differential equations in their head, or because they didn't found the world's most important NGO, or because they didn't already get their Ph.D, or whatever. It's an amazing thing that the effect of getting into such a selective university can be such a widespread self-disenchantment. Many arrive at Yale after being the smartest and most extra-curricular person in their high school. Suddenly they are surrounded by other smartest and extra-curricularist people, and it can change how they think about themselves. This problem also comes up for people that excel at something in high school and stop pursuing it in college—the track champion that doesn't run in college, the math whiz that decides to pursue English, etc.

I have a few things to say to that.

The first being, again, you deserve to be here. The admissions officers are very good at their jobs. Even if you feel like you're struggling, even if you feel like you are learning the fundamentals of writing or calculus for the first time. Even if it seems like others find everything much easier - they don't.

I was tempted to say don't compare yourself to other people at Yale, but I don't think that's great advice. Of course you will compare yourself to others. And the problem isn't comparison itself, but rather that the comparison is flawed. People at Yale are very good at seeming very impressive, happy, well-rounded, and otherwise flawless. It's an illusion. People here are impressive- but they all struggle, fail, work really hard, get upset, have problems and insecurities etc. Basically, [everyone poops](#). Everything you have done so far has been enough to get you into Yale, and it's worth remembering that.

But maybe more importantly, Yale—full of so much talent and accomplishment—nudges you to think about other things as well. You cannot rely on being the -----est. I'm stepping out of my place here since I'm still an undergrad, but it seems to me like the four years you spend at college will help shape the adult you are, the person you become (of course, not exclusively). Each year at Yale has been remarkably different and has presented me with different challenges in ways I could never have predicted; looking back, though I have grown academically, it is those other challenges that have forced me to grow the most. Yale in many ways is a competitive place—classes, grades, fellowships, jobs, leadership positions, etc. But I think it would be a mistake to reduce these four transitional years to a race. Do compete, but not exclusively. Put as much thought into the way you treat your friends, strangers, romantic interests, family members, and yourself as you would put into your essay or job application. Bolster the person that writes the resume as much

as the resume itself.

In short- take care of yourself and others. Value yourself- and don't be deceived into thinking you shouldn't. Be open to new people, they will surprise you. Be open to new ideas, they will too. I hope four years from now you smile at your own reflection, and you're ok eating dinner with only yourself for company.

And then you go do your big great things.

Two last thoughts:

Remember I am only three years older than you and don't really know what I'm talking about.

And lastly—don't do what I just did. Be concise, and if you do end up writing an essay, make sure it answers the question.

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Any pro-tips about your first weeks at Yale?

Claire: Explore, explore, explore. It's so much fun. Also, hang out with people on old campus. I still vividly remember meeting some of my best friends on old campus during the first few days at Yale.

Andre: don't go around alone. A) it's not safe B) if you're wandering alone you're not making friends. Also, take the opportunity to sit next to whoever you want during meals. It's kinda exciting and you never know who you'll meet.

Nikki: Be nice to your roommates + suitemates. At some point you will have to depend on each other + you have to spend the next year together, so be courteous and inclusive. Don't make assumptions about people. It's Yale. People are gonna surprise. Also, don't rule anything out. Try it all once. Oh and re-read Ira's amazing [advice here](#). Reiterating what he said, just be confident in yourself and Yale's process. Everything is going to workout.

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What's the coolest thing you've learned at Yale?

Zaina: 1. Evolution 2. Failing well, which is practically evolution.

Andre: Social psychology. People are much more influenced than we think we are by how things are presented

Clare: Milton was mind-blowing. So was the moment when my suitemates transformed into my best friends.

Nikki: Do what you want to do and go your own way. Definitely trust your intuition.

Also, don't tie your self-worth and identity to the things you do and achieve. Take a step back and think about who you actually are and who you want to be. It's a really terrifying sucky hard painful process but it's also incredibly freeing to figure out how to present yourself without relying on your accomplishments, GPAs, and awards. You'll be a stronger, healthier, happier person for it. When your identity is tied to your achievements you tend to have a need for validation from people which makes you dependent on others for your self-worth + happiness...which is really an unsustainable way of life...and no one wants to be needy. It's a hard lesson to learn, even harder to put into practice, and it's definitely more of a life lesson than a Yale lesson, but I think if you can figure this out or at least start figuring this out at Yale you will be lightyears ahead in your personal growth and ultimately professional growth.

Also, I think you learn to just come from a place of humility + understanding in your interactions. You realize that everyone is coming from somewhere and dealing with something, even if they show no sign of it. When you just realize that everyone has their own issues and problems, it makes it easier to work with people and come from a place of understanding/tolerance, especially when people get on your nerves and you want to punch them in the face.

Oh, and be confident in yourself. Everything is going to work out just fine. Just keep going and don't be afraid to ask for help. Your frocos are here to catch you when you fall. Actually, for the most part, the entire Yale community is.

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What were some of your favorite classes you took freshman year (or other years)?

Connor: My classes designed for freshmen were incredible. ENG 114 w/ Barbara Stuart was super helpful for me in bringing my writing up to a collegiate level , though I would definitely check out the evaluations for the different professors! I also really enjoyed my Freshmen Seminar; they're often interesting, and it's nice to be able to be in a seminar that's specifically designed for students who haven't taken that many Yale courses or how to use all of Yale's resources, etc. Also, I found it helpful to prioritize the know professor (and his evaluations!) over the title of class,

just because it sounds cool doesn't mean it will be!

Nikki: I loved my econ seminar with Tolga Koker. It was a great way to figure out what economics at Yale looks like. Also, Tolga Koker has one of *the most* fantastic personalities ever. Ever. He's one of the greatest teachers I've had in all of my life. I also took Introduction to Painting. I am not artistically gifted at all (and my "art" certainly reflected that) but it was cool to take something outside my comfort zone and explore a different side of Yale. I also somehow wound up taking Yoruba, the language of Nigeria, although I'm not Nigerian at all. I've been in language every year since and it's one of my favorite classes ever at Yale. It's a small program so we are like one big family. I loved English 114 too (I took it with Prof. Barbara Stuart who is a lovely and no-nonsense and super supportive...basically she is an amazingly intelligent southern angel from above) and thought it was a great way to make sure you were ready to write at the college level.

Claire: English 120 was phenomenal. I took that with Dr. Barbara Stuart who is a sassy English professor from Florida. (She has a great southern accent.) I also loved taking a freshman seminar, 20th Century African American Freedom Movements with Professor Feimster. (Connor was in this class too!) It gave me a chance to study the civil right movement in depth, something that I hadn't ever really been able to do. Plus, the professors for freshmen seminars are almost always awesome---they're all about working with first year students and getting you really interested in their subjects. Finally, I'll mention that I took an advanced seminar in EP&E called Money in Politics. It was taught by a post-grad who was studying the economics of political finance laws, and it was SO interesting. Also, it just goes to show that freshmen can get into seminars with a few strategies. (Talk to me about that!)

Andre: everyone loves English. I took 127, Readings in American Lit, and read some really cool books (beware, though: different professors have different reading lists). Intro to Psychology with Marvin Chun is a FANTASTIC class as well. Wait and take it with him, even if you're not planning on being a psych major.

Clare: I took English 125 & 126 - Major English Poets - and it blew my world wide open. This is the required track for the major, and most people take it as sophomores, but if you know you want to be an English major and you're fairly confident in your writing, DO IT. You read Chaucer, Spenser, Donne, Milton, Pope, Wordsworth, Yeats, and Eliot curled up in a chair in the beautiful Davenport library every night of freshman year. Welcome to college.

Ira: I also loved English 120. But there other great intro classes not in the English Department! Intro Psych with Master Chun was a lot of fun and a very popular class. I also liked (most of) Gateway to Global affairs. That class is divided up into sections, and half of the class was taught by McChrystal and his British counterpart- which was really cool. There was also a section on HIV policy which was also great. But each year the subjects/professors change, so you should see who's teaching each module. Constitutional Law with Akhil Amar I think is worth taking to understand a lot of things going on in the country -- and if you're excited about reading a lot of Supreme Court decisions. The Freshman Seminars are great options if you get in.

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How do you organize all of your e-mail and schedules and life?

Connor: I use the Eli Apps (yale.edu for gmail essentially) and that works well, though it's also pretty popular to have it forwarded to your gmail. Yale student techs can help set up all that during Camp Yale if you're not a computer wiz. Also google calendars are amazing.

Nikki: I use google calendar + google tasks. It's a really cool way to let me visualize my day and weeks. Also, at the beginning of a semester you can put in reminders for all of your big exams, papers, and assignments, and set reminders. Mashable has a great guide for [using google cal here](#). This has been so helpful in keeping track of deadlines. I like to plan out daily tasks the night before that way figuring out what needs to get done day of is much easier. I'm also a huge fan of [Evernote](#) + Mashable has a great [guide on how to use](#) it.

Andre: I didn't start using Gcal until sophomore year. Don't be like me. Learn it now and know what you're up to forever.

Clare: I use a good old-fashioned Moleskin planner. It goes everywhere with me, and I write all of my appointments and lists in it. It never crashes, it fits in a purse, and it's never obtrusive to pull out. Plus it's cheaper than a laptop to replace.

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College is expensive. How can I save and make money? (NEW!)

Nikki:

Okay. Here we go. My thoughts are divided into two sections: Saving Money and Making Money.

Saving Money

1. Get on mint.com-> it allows you to see where all of your money is going. It can be eye-opening when you see how much you spent at Gheav last month or how much money you actually spend going out. (Gheav is Gourmet Heaven, a pricy convenience store on campus.)

2. Have a budget. I have a monthly and a weekly one. When I'm being super strict with money, I put away my debit/credit cards (I usually hide them under my bed) and withdraw exactly the amount of money I have to spend for the week (which is more often than not no money). Then it's much harder for me to overspend/spend.

3. Go halvesies on things. I split meals with people all the time if I go out to eat. Sometimes I do. Sometimes I don't. Depends on how hungry I am and if I have more than \$3 in my bank account.

4. Don't be afraid to say no. Sometimes you just may not have the finances to do something. The first time I had to say no to something at Yale, I was super angry about it. But then I realized there are a thousand and one free things to do here that are just as awesome as the thing I turned down. Also, there have been times I should have said no and didn't and you will more than likely be mad/stressed about going outside of what you've budgeted and it may not be worth it anyways. Do NOT feel bad that you had to say no to something. I know fear of missing out can be strong but what you turned down is probably not the earth-shattering thing you think it was. The most life changing events at Yale usually happen very serendipitously in people's common rooms or in the dining halls or just randomly when you least expect it. Oh, and I should clarify, you will very rarely have to say no. With the exception of birthday dinners, most social events are relatively free.

5. Take initiative when planning outings. The best way to make sure a social event is going to be within your budget is to plan it (and you should also then be aware of other people's budgets too). Yalies are usually down for anything. If you kind of invite people out you'll have a little more control over what's going down. That said, a lot of nights out are sort of go with the flow. But usually you flow to somewhere free/inexpensive. You might also end up at [Mamoun's](#) or wherever is open late at night and you feel like eating (hello, again, gheav). These places are usually fairly cheap (no, not you gheav)...but you can either split something with someone or abstain...people aren't usually lucid enough to really care/notice at that point.

6. Be super super careful with credit cards. You are going to start getting all these letters

telling you to sign-up with Discover or Visa or whatever company. BE CAREFUL. Try to not have to get a credit card. If you get one, set your monthly limit really low and only use it for emergencies (also get a credit card with no/super low interest rates and some sort of cash back benefit program) And emergencies are not that super cute skirt you saw at Urban. As much as I wish it did, that does not constitute an emergency.

7. Wait to buy your books + borrow from upperclassmen. So this is especially important for seminar classes. When you first walk in a class and get the syllabus there will be a lot of books on it. You will be tempted to buy these books all at once. Don't. Some books the class won't even get to because of time. Some books aren't worth buying if the Prof. just wants you to read a chapter or two. Look at the syllabus early instead. Get to the library and check out the books you can. Search for them for free on google books. Look online. Download the cheaper e-book version. Make friends in the class and split the book list (this is more complicated but it can work if you're good enough friends). Ask the professor if they have an extra copy. There are a ton of options. Also, you'll get to know some upperclassmen (especially by second semester). Ask them for their books, although they will usually offer if you tell them you're in the class. I took conlaw last semester and it had like a gazillion dollar book. I borrowed it from one of my friends, who had taken the class, for free AND it was annotated with all of her (still relevant) notes. Borrowing books is the best.

8. Buy in bulk and buy on Amazon. So most of the places closest to Yale have major price inflation. I'm talking like in-the-middle-of-WW3-and-the-dollar-has-collapsed levels of price inflation. I would either buy your staples at home or on Amazon (though when you add in shipping sometimes you don't save anything...but you do get the satisfaction of sticking it to the man...unless you get amazon prime which I think is free for college students right now). Or make a costco run at the beginning of the school year and stock up like you're about to wait out the zombie apocalypse. Get your deodorant, soap, lotion, toiletries, snacks, etc for cheap that way. (Ira: Careful with Amazon Prime. So Amazon College is free and awesome and it's basically Amazon prime, but it only lasts a year I think. Then Amazon --depending on if you were careful in signing up for Amazon College--will automatically enroll you in Amazon Prime and charge you. Just be aware of what's going on. If you're using Amazon a lot, Prime could definitely save you money though.)

9. Cancel your Yale Health Plan. The Yale Health Plan is expensive and doesn't actually get you that much. You can waive it and not have to pay the 1K+ for it though. You will still basically have access to everything you need. Let's say (and this may or may not have happened to me) you fall down the stairs of LC, hit your head, and then faint like the weirdo-wacko-clutz you are--they will still see you at Yale Health. Or you randomly take a run up East Rock, fall on the East rocks, and bruise all the bones in your body--they will still fix you up. If you need medical attention, Yale is not going to leave you out in the cold (All students automatically have The Basic Health plan) They'll take care of your immediate health needs for free--health plan or not.

That said, if you need subsequent + more serious follow-up attention, then you are probably going to need to use your own insurance. I've had/have a lot of knee problems (hey ACL) and usually just schedule all my appointments for during breaks. You can also find people who take your insurance closer to Yale.

Oh, and this is important: Not having the Yale Health plan does not jeopardize your ability to use Mental Health. You get something like 12 free sessions and if you need it, access to group therapy.

[This document is EXTREMELY USEFUL](#) in explaining what is covered under the health plan and what is not. And ignore that part where they are like "you won't have access to the Yale pharmacy" and try to make it a big deal. There's a Walgreen's down the street. Please.

You have until September 15th to waive your health care. I strongly suggest considering it. 1K+ is a lot of money to pay for things you probably won't use or can get for free. Also, if you don't cancel/waive this semester you can waive it for Spring semester, if you do so by January 31st.

If you are a varsity level athlete though, I would talk to your coaches/teammates because you may need to use PT often or something.

Making Money

1. **After first semester, think about getting a job.** Take the time to adjust the first semester, if you can, and then consider getting job--either on-campus or off. I know for me having a steady source of income eliminated a lot of stress and gave me a little more wiggle room. I also think if you find the right job it can give you invaluable career experience. You are going to have to work a little harder in finding it and push a little harder to get it, but it can be really worth your time.

If you need to get a job right away, try to get a really flexible job. There are a lot of on-campus jobs that let you design your schedule. These are gold. Also, all the Masters of colleges have aids. You can e-mail them and ask about this.

Also, I don't know if this program is still running, but my frosh year you could get paid to work at [New Haven Reads](#), a really great local non-profit focused on, surprisingly, reading. You qualify for this if you are on federal work-study. If you don't qualify for federal work study, you will not be able to get paid...you can def volunteer though! Look on your financial aid and see if you have "work-study" or "federal work study" listed.

2. **Until you get a job + on top of your job, you might want to consider doing some psych/med school studies.** I kind of went crazy with these freshman year and made a

at least 1K dollars for less than 40 hours worth of work. The nice thing about doing psych studies is that there is no long-term commitment and you can schedule them for whenever is convenient for you. You also feel like you are contributing to scientific advancement. Lolz. Just be careful that you don't go too far with them and make sure you're comfortable with the study. Most of them are pretty benign though. Like you can make \$45 dollars for watching a 20 minute video and filling out a questionnaire. I also once took a nap in a MRI machine for an hour and made \$80 bucks. Best nap of my life.

- a. Also, the Yale School of Management (SOM) has Five Dollar Fridays (they are called something like that) in which you some survey for ten minutes for \$5. That's Toad's money right there. Thank you SOM, thank you.

3. **Get a paid summer internship and save that money....or get an over-funded fellowship.** So during my summers, I've tried to do things I was super interested in but things that were also well paid. Working over the summer will allow you to save some of your earnings and then you'll have them to work with over the school year or to put towards the student contribution portion of your financial aid package. I know this can be a controversial point, but having to take a paid internship does not mean you have to miss out on opportunities. I thought this at first too. But then I realized that yes, a lot of people will go abroad and just explore for a summer. And yes, you may have to turn down positions that don't make enough money/cost too much in living expenses. I know this kind of sucks but you will have an amazing time at your internships too and make amazing friends...and you will start building an amazing network to boot. There are a ton of really cool places that will pay you for your time and effort.

- a. Also, I've never done this, but Yale has fellowships specifically for travel fees and living expenses to support summer internships. I've had a few friends who have won fellowships and gotten to have the summer of dreams on Yale's dime, while getting paid. On top of that, Yale's fellowships usually have a lot of wiggle room so a lot of my friends had money (in the thousands) left over at the end of their summer. Just don't rule anything out. You will have to be more selective in your summer plans + put some more effort into make them happen, but you won't have opportunities eliminated.

- b. Oh, and use your network. I worked in NYC by frosh summer and the position was paid, but not paid enough to afford living in NYC housing + saving money for the school year. I talked to everyone I knew and ended staying with the friend of a friend of a family friend who graciously opened her home to me. It was the BEST BEST housing I've ever lived in and it was nearly free. At first it was awkward and I resisted taking such a big favor from someone I literally had never met before, but then it was utterly amazing and me and my "Aunt" still chat to this day. The points of this are twofold:

1. **Don't be afraid to ask for help.** It's not a sign of weakness. It's

not a sign that you don't have your things together. It just means that there's something that you need but are unable to provide yourself. That's perfectly fine. What isn't fine is knowing that you need something and not speaking up and at least asking for it. It's not begging. It's not demeaning. It's accepting your circumstances and working to improve them. The lady who I lived with that summer taught me two fundamentally important lessons about life: 1) Ask for what you need and 99% of the time it will be given to you, if you work for it and 2) Remember all the people who helped you up and pay it forward. People love to help people...especially young people like you who are focused and motivated and trying to achieve something. Just ask for what you need. Don't beg, but ask. You'll be surprised what people will be willing to do to help you. Just remember to pay it forward when you're at the place where you can too. That's life.

2. Also, and I struggle with this majorly, **don't be afraid to accept help** when it comes to you. I know you're independent. Almost everyone here is. But we have to lean on each other to make it sometimes. Sometimes you need to graciously and gratefully take the help that was offered you. I'm bad about this too. But we all need help. Don't let your pride get in the way of your future.

- ii. Also, on the point of going abroad for the summer or semester, Yale believes everyone should have that opportunity in some form. If you are on any sort of financial aid, there's money to cover that experience. You can learn more [here](#).

4. **Babysitt.** There's thousands of graduate students, professors, and young professionals in New Haven. Find them....especially the one's with small children. They are chronically overwhelmed and will over-pay you to eat their food, read their children fairy tales, and watch *Law and Order* once the kiddies go to bed. I worked for two professors my freshman year and it was a good gig (also, working for people who are professors is great because they understand when you have to study and just can't work). There's also something really comforting about being in a home when you're at college. It's also really nice to interact with people outside of the age of 17-23. I will say this, credentials are important when landing a babysitting job, so this is going to be harder if you've never worked with children before.

5. **Find odd jobs to do when you get home.** I have babysitting jobs lined up, if I can. I also will tutor via skype or in-person. I also have friends that come home from school and work retail or gift wrap presents or work at the pumpkin patch. Think seasonal work. Also, Yale Admissions has Yale Admission Ambassadors. Basically you go to 2-3 school over your break and talk them about Yale. It's a great way to show your Yale pride, reach out to students who

may have never been exposed to Yale, and make some fun money (wait, isn't all money fun) while you're home from school. I think this is for sophomores and up only, but it's a good thing to keep in mind.

6. Still be on the lookout for scholarships. There are a number of scholarships that are for people in college as opposed to HS seniors. Consequently, not many people apply because they aren't looking for them anymore. Just be on the lookout.

Clare: Nikki's advice is fantastic. Seriously, follow all of this! Also know that different departments have odd pockets of money for one-time needs. Last November my grandmother died and I didn't have enough money to pay for a last-minute plane ticket back to California. **Dean Brasseaux found money for it** in the Davenport "Student Emergencies" budget. Also, if you're on Federal Loans and a student athlete, there's all kinds of money for you in the Athletics Department.

Like Nikki said, the hardest part is just asking. It can feel embarrassing - you don't want people to know that you can't pay to travel to your own grandmother's funeral. **But this money is available because Yale believes that all of its students should have an equally stellar education, regardless of where they grew up.** And it's not embarrassing. Most people are broke college students at Yale - they just don't show it. But they're in the same basket as you, and they should be asking for help too. Talk to us, talk to the Dean or Master, talk to a Peer Liason if you have one - talk to anyone. Just ask.

Ira: The above advice is so great (Nikki and Clare) and I have only a couple of random tips. Not nearly as useful as the general advice provided by Nikki and Clare. These things will probably become obvious once you get to Yale:

Food: If you're the type of person that likes to eat late, don't be deterred by the dining hall hours. Get some tupperware and make yourself a sandwich/save yourself some food for later.

If you do end up buying food-- I second Nikki: Mamouns is great. Tasty, substantial falafel sandwich for under 3 dollars. Gheav, while typically outrageously priced, also sells egg and cheese sandwiches for \$2.50 (though I hear prices this summer might have been bumped up to 3.00). Lot's of reasonable pizza slices around too.

But obviously the best way to save money on food is to not buy food. Yale's dining halls are great. Many people get tired of the dining hall food by the end of the year. Prevent this by being creative in the Dining hall. Mix stuff together. If something is really plain, use sauce from another entree. Or make your own sauce. [Here's](#) a website dedicated to creative Yale dining hall recipes. I don't know if it's still updated, but you get the idea. You are not limited to what Yale Dining lists on their menu. But once again, Yale dining is great.

Activities: Lots of free good times to be had.

Lots and lots of free student performances.

Some cost money. If you like seeing shows, but don't want to pay for them-- apply to be a House Manager! Basically, you get paid to go see shows. You do more than that, but that's what it boils down to. Flexible hours too.

Get on the [Yale Outdoors panlist](#). A lot of their trips are free! It's a great way to do something fun, see a different area, and to meet people. And a lot of their trips are very low commitment: sunrise hikes at west rock for example. I remember one of my favorite friday nights from Freshman fall was a night bike ride to Lake Wintergreen for swimming. There were like 40 of us (I borrowed someone's bike because I didn't have one at that point), and it was spectacular.

Also read Nikki's advice [here](#) about buying textbooks

Andre: One more quick thing on budgeting: if you're trying to decide where best to allocate your money, [spend it on experiences, not things](#).

Also, on days when I have a break at 10:30, I like to go to Commons to eat a late breakfast. This lets me use my lunch swipe at Durfee's (which is on Old Campus) to slowly stockpile food like peanut butter and bread, which then allows me to make my own snack at night rather than spending money buying food from somewhere else.

Connor: Don't go to gheav every night. Sure, some of your friends will, and you might want to, but it's really a terrible investment. You're much better off at buying in bulk from a store. Also, don't buy food/anything at Durfee's- sure use your meal swipe, but try to never buy food unless you want to get majorly ripped off. If you know you're eating out one meal, try to go for lunch and then use your meal swipe at Durfees for snacks for later! I also tried not to go out unless it was for a birthday or something; if you do go out though, maybe try going splitsies with someone. New Haven also has really good pizza that's often not too expensive if you go with a group. Also, there are flexible jobs on campus that you can balance along with schoolwork and activities.

Claire: I second everything said above. A few categories to help save you money

1. Books:

- a. Check to see if your professor put the book on 24-hour reserve in the library (usually Sterling). This is a system where a person can only take a book out for 24 hours, intended to give students a chance to read the book but also to limit how long a single person can have it. Other reserve options are even better, like 2-hour limits or a restriction on checking a book out altogether. Hint: if you're using this option, go to the library EARLY. Don't wait until the last minute, or the book will most certainly be claimed by another procrastinator.

- b. Search on Yale Library Orbis Catalog to see if it's available as an "electronic resource" (meaning a *free* e-book). This is especially true of classics which don't have the same level of copyright restrictions to keep them off the internet.
 - c. Search Google Books. This is ESPECIALLY TRUE FOR CHAPTERS. Google Previews will usually have the most important chapters of a book online.
 - d. If you want to sell your books at the end of the semester, compare the prices you'll get from Amazon and the Yale Bookstore, both of which buy back your used books. I have found I get much more money from Amazon, and then you can use the Amazon gift card to buy books in the future.)
- 2. Food:
 - a. Cheap places: A few things at Gheav (egg and cheese sandwich on a roll = \$2.50), Main Garden on Elm and Howe, Brick Oven Pizza, Mahmoud's, Basil, FOODTRUCKS (near the ice rink Monday - Friday or on the corner of York and Elm), Miya's LATE NIGHT (\$5 for 5-6 pieces of their specialty sushi from 10:00 p.m. until they close), and more. I have also found the [Yale Wiki](#) to be extremely helpful in this regards.
 - b. Take a few pieces of fruit with you from the dining hall. It's ALLOWED and a great way to have a free, healthy snack later in the day.
 - c. Don't work in coffee shops if you're going to feel pressured to buy something. My freshman year, I really liked the idea of working in coffee shops (because it's so adult, ya know?) but then I ended up buying coffee and a cookie every day. That's \$3.75 a day, man. Too much. Stick to the libraries if you want to study.
 - d. Cheap coffee (if you need it like I do): Atticus (\$1, cash only) and Bass (\$1.25 now I think?) are the cheapest. Blue State is close to \$2 now. JoJo's, BookTrader, Koffee(?), Green Well, and Starbucks are going to be pricier. Also, get yourself a reusable coffee mug and take coffee out of the dining hall. It's some caffeine, albeit a small amount.
 - e. BookTrader sells day-old muffins and bagels at a discounted price (like \$2-3 for a bag with multiple muffins or bagels). I find that's a good way to snack cheaply.
- 3. Travel:
 - a. Buy plane tickets early. Avoid the 3 week window when prices start going up.
 - b. If you know you're going to be traveling at the end of the semester, set up a price alert on Kayak.
 - c. If you take Amtrak home generally, sign up for the student card. It's \$15 but it will save you a boatload long term.
- 4. Misc.
 - a. If you want to go see movies, sign up for the Criterion Club Card (it's free). You'll get \$6 movies on Tuesday nights at the Criterion theater. They also have some cool specialty movies at 11:30 on Friday and Saturday night (\$5 for regular, \$4 for Criterion Club members).

- b. Ira's idea of being a house manager for shows is awesome. Also, keep in mind, even if you're not a house manager, you can sign up to be an usher for the DRAMAT shows. Just email the producers in advance.
 - c. WOMEN, your haircut does not need to be \$50. Go to HairNiche in the lobby of Hotel Duncan (google it). \$20 haircut for women, and they've always done a good job for me.
- 5. Get a job
 - a. This has probably been the best thing for keeping my money-related stress levels down.
 - b. My freshman year I got my first job by contacting the supervisor of a friend. My friend had just been hired for this swanky job at the Yale Repertory Theatre, and so I emailed the supervisor asking if she had more positions. Turned out, she did (positions that were not originally posted on the student employment server). Bottom line is, keep your ears open. Search beyond the student employment site.
 - c. Here's the student employment site. <https://yalestudentjobs.org/>

Nikki: I second Claire's travel advice! Also, consider taking the bus if you're nearby. I'm from outside of DC and take the bus from either New Haven or NYC and save anywhere from \$50-\$100 compared to taking the train. Greyhound is a tad more expensive but better run than MegaBus....but MegaBus will get you where you're going in relative comfort. I've never done the Bolt bus but apparently it's just as good.

Also, if you're flying make sure you've signed up for rewards points. My little sister goes to school in Cali and she's gotten a couple of free flights already. Get people to give you their reward points too.

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How do you adjust to Yale? (NEW!)

Clare: For plenty of Yalies, the culture at Yale will feel very different from the culture where you grew up. This was true for me - I grew up in a middle-class small town in Washington State. When I got to Yale I was taken aback - I had never heard of the boarding schools Yalies had gone to, and I didn't even recognize the way people dressed out here on the East Coast! I missed trees and mountains and the way things were in my small town. I felt self-conscious about my background. I struggled to adjust.

But over time, I've realized two things to be true:

1) Almost everyone feels this way. Seriously. The kids from Washington State feel this way, the kids from another country feel this way, the kids from the boarding schools that intimidated

me feel this way. *Everyone is adjusting at the same time. You are not alone.* The best way to realize this is to talk openly about it - to your roommate or your best friend or your froco (we're here to help!). "This is different from what I'm used to, and it's hard for me," is really hard to say the first time, but it gets easier. There are so many resources to ease your transition to and time at Yale. Come talk about them :)

2) Don't let your success here during your freshman year impact how much you feel like you belong or don't belong. Put another way: it's possible to succeed here no matter where you come from, but it's okay if it doesn't feel that way after a year or even two. It took me five semesters to feel like I "belonged" at Yale, but the truth is, regardless of where you come from and regardless of the grades you get here, you belong here. Yale doesn't make mistakes, and they wanted YOU. As Ira says [elsewhere in this document](#), no matter how different you feel, you belong.

Nikki:

Remember that it's a process. It takes time. Transitioning to Yale can take a while and it's different for everyone. We are here to support you through it. Also remember these things:

1. It's okay to feel vastly overwhelmed. It means you're at a place where there is room for you to grow. Trust me, we were all overwhelmed when we first got here. You'll grow like we grew and be so thankful for it. But don't ever hesitate to reach out for help. Your frocos are here, your dean, your master, your PL, your whoever. Reach out.

2. If you feel super awkward, remember everyone feels that way. Everyone. If I could tell you stories about my awkwardness, I would. But you'll have to ask me those in person.

3. If you feel out of place, remember that you belong here. Re-read [Ira's advice](#). He puts it much better than I do...but just remember that you belong here. Absolutely. Hands down. No questions asked. You belong.

4. Everyone struggles at Yale. You're not doing Yale right if you're not falling flat on your face on occasion. Don't let anybody fool you.

A coach once told me (and I'm sure he got it from someone) that comparing yourself to people is useless because you inevitably compare your behind-the-scenes film to everyone else's highlight reel. It's trite but true. Trust me when I say everyone is struggling at some point. Even the most put-together, accomplished, stylish, go-getters on campus. And remember, to everyone else, *you are* one of the most put-together, accomplished, stylish, go-getters on campus. They are looking at your highlight reel. You should remember it too. Don't solely focus on your behind-the-scenes. Acknowledge it so you learn/improve and move on. You're doing just fine.

5. Yale can be major culture shock. Like Clare, I had never heard of half the schools where

some of my now closest friends went. What I was used to was different (and the same) from what some of my friends were used to. At first I was self-conscious about it. But, you know, it doesn't really matter. You went to private school. I went to public school. We're both here now. We are both here to learn. We both earned it. You have different experiences than me and we can both learn from one another. In many ways, everyone's Yale education is about exposure. It's about learning about people from all different walks of life and appreciating and understanding them. Don't let anyone intimidate you. You belong here. We all [can't say it enough](#). Don't ever question it.

Also, Yale needs variety to function. How boring/dysfunctional would it be if Yale were just 5K carbon copies of you or 5K carbon copies of me? You have something to offer everyone here. Do not discredit your personal experiences.

6. Don't shy away from what's uncomfortable. And this is not an introvert-extrovert type thing. I'm an extrovert and I definitely shied away from things my freshman year because A) I am from a smallish town and hadn't had to make friends since 2nd grade and B) I wasn't sure if people were going to like me enough or if I was funny enough or pretty enough or whatever else enough. Screw it. Be yourself and be confident. Remember everyone is feeling uneasy and insecure. Also, it doesn't really matter if you're the funniest, the sweetest, the most-likely to be a model, or whatever other superlative. You just have to be you. You are enough. You, just the way you are. You are enough.

Also not shying away from things doesn't necessarily mean being shy. It means more than just engaging with people. It means letting people in too.

7. You don't know what you're doing? Nobody else does either. I'm telling you. Nobody knows. This is not to say just wing it or nobody has their lives organized...they do. But there can be this feeling, especially freshman year, that everything is sort of chaos. It's fine. It is craziness but it's supposed to be that way. Figure things out the best you can but be flexible and adaptable.

My little sister told me that at Stanford they call this feeling floating duck syndrome--everyone looks like they are peacefully floating on the water just chilling, but underneath they are working their little legs off trying to stay afloat....you just can't see it. That's the perfect analogy for Yale. Everyone is kind of frantically working, but we are all really really good at hiding it. This frenetic feeling won't wholly go away...and you don't want it to. Each year at Yale bring fresh challenges and experiences. A little chaos means you're doing Yale right. Relish it. You are going to graduate before you know it (take it from a Senior whose real bitter about it).

8. It's okay to feel average. Everyone feels this way. Especially when you are used to that king/queen of the world feeling you had in high school.

All that is important is that you are doing your best. Not that you are *the* best. Go hard. Do what you have to do to get your life in order. Do *your* best. But have the grace to forgive yourself when you mess it all up or when it all falls apart or when you don't do as well as you wanted to. It's totally fine. You learn the most when you fail, and it would be a shame for you to get your Yale degree and not have learned anything.

9. Remember, you're an adult now. That means you get to make your own decisions and you're responsible for them. But it also means that you shouldn't be afraid to ask for help--it's a sign of maturity and humility. Being an adult also means learning your limits and respecting them--academically and otherwise. And be respectful in general--of other people's boundaries, religions, quirks, whatever. Just be respectful.

10. You can still be an adult and be homesick, or sad, or scared. These aren't kid emotions. They are actually pretty adult emotions. It's fine/normal to miss home. It's fine to be terrified. It's fine to be less than excited to come to Yale. It's okay to be sad about leaving home. Just remember that your home will always be with you, even if you aren't with it. It will always be a part of you.

Oh, and trust me, own your home...even the parts of it you hate. Even the crazy parts you're embarrassed about. Don't be ashamed. You can absolutely reinvent yourself but you can't redo the past. Learn to accept the good, the bad, and the ugly and do not carry burdens that aren't your own...especially the ones that are out of your control. That stuff is too heavy to carry...and you already have to lug all those books around. Lolz. I'm corny. I know. Sawry.

Oh and 17+ years of experiences and relationships don't just disappear because you hopped on a plane/train/car and came to Connecticut. And because your home is such a fundamental part of you it's okay to be sad/nervous about leaving...and you might even feel guilty about leaving or feel like because you didn't choose to stay in-state you're morphing into an elitist monster that your people will never love again. You're not. You're opening yourself up to new experiences and new challenges and you deserve to have them. It's not selfish of you (just make sure you are doing your part). It's you striking out and going your own way. It's you taking ownership and responsibility for your life and charting its direction the best way you know how. Be proud of yourself. People will be proud of you to, it might take them a minute (and they might never show it),but they'll be proud.

11. You will find your people. It will happen. You'll be eating dinner with some rando and figure out you both love that one really obscure thing that nobody else is into and then you'll be best friends and you'll laugh about it at your 40-Year Yale Reunion. That was a really roundabout way of saying you will make friends. There's somebody for everybody at Yale. We all find our people here...and if you feel like you're not...come talk to your froco! We know the people who are really into that one obscure thing that you love and can probably point you in the direction of your peeps.

But...be open about making different friends. Make friends who AREN'T into the things you love. You'll be a better person for it. And don't Facebook judge people. My roommate somehow thought I was an over-the-top southern pageant queen via FB and I thought she was a weird and introverted nerd. Only one of those descriptions turned out to be true. Lolz. I kid. We were both totally wrong about each other. Let people make their first impression in person and not on the internet. They'll surprise you and enrich your life in ways you can't even imagine right now but you have to give them the room to do it.

12. Please remember that it's all going to be alright. It all works out. You'll finish the papers you left until the last minutes. You'll make friends. You'll figure out that no one knows how to do the last question on the PSET either. You'll figure out how to balance your time. It's all a game of trial and error. Just don't get freaked out at the error part and keep on keepin on.

Phew. That was super long. Sorry. I'll stop rambling now.

Ira: Don't stop, Nikki. Never stop

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Important Links

General:

http://www.yalewiki.org/wiki/Main_Page - An awesome site that's basically a more comprehensive version of this Document

<http://www.yale.edu/sis/> - Main portal for a lot of your Yale info. Come here to make your final schedule, check final grades, access billing and financial aid info, etc.

<http://yalecollege.yale.edu/content/academic-calendars> - Yale College academic calendar

<http://www.yale.edu/sis/building.codes.html> - Yale building codes.

<http://map.yale.edu/map/> - Find the building you're looking for.

Bluebooking:

<https://ybb.yale.edu/> - your main bluebooking site

<http://students.yale.edu/oci/search.jsp> - Old school. These are official listings.

Sometimes ybb has glitches, and you can come look here.

<http://bluebook.yaleplus.com/Bluebook> - A new, cool, alternative bluebooking site. Sort classes by rating, filter, etc.

Classes:

https://classesv2.yale.edu/portal_ - Classesv2 is the site many of your classes will use to post readings, problem sets, announcements, etc.

www.yalewco.com - Writing Tutor sign-up

<http://web.library.yale.edu/buildings/Calendar.aspx#.UfL1udJwqi4> - Library hours

Jobs:

<https://yalestudentjobs.org/> - find on campus jobs here

<http://ucs.yalecollege.yale.edu/> - Undergraduate Career Service- your portal for jobs/internships

Misc:

<http://to.yale.edu/shuttle> - Yale Shuttle locator

<http://laundryview.com/> - When you're logged into the Yale network, this website will tell you what washing machines/dryers are available, and how much time they have left if not available.

Important Contact Information:

Yale Security: 203-785-5555

Yale Security Escort Service: 203-432-9255

Walden Peer Counseling: (203) 432-TALK

Share Center: 203-432-2000

Yale Health: 203-432-0123

Maintenance, central campus: 203-432-6888

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