

# Powerful suicide prevention anthems

Empowering songs that bring awareness and appreciation to artists to gain more recognition.

Behind the underlying beats and catchy lyrics, there is a deeper story to be told. Whether it is a sexual innuendo, or just simply improper and profound language, sometimes lyrics can be lost in translation. The vocal and instrumental sounds combined makes a sort of beauty behind the words. It expresses emotion and harmony. An artist may incorporate word play, figurative language, and rhymes to make the music however, the listener must decode the deeper messages within the words.

We must look a little closer at the lyrics of our favorite songs to really understand the message the artist is attempting to tell. Music is a hidden language, the lyrics express the dark realities that cannot be said aloud.



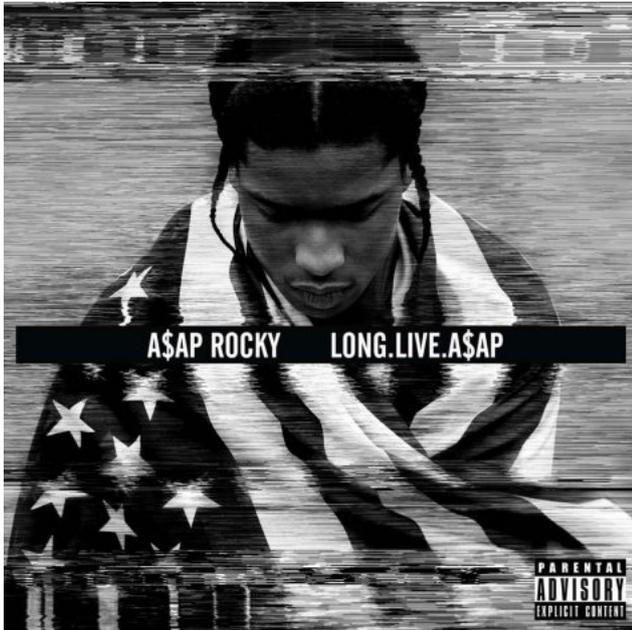
**“XO TOUR Llif3” Lil Uzi Vert**

A song that will make you come to tears. Lil Uzi Vert, originally Symere Woods, delivers his piece with real emotion, seemingly stricken with depression and suicidal thoughts. *"She said 'Baby, I am not afraid to die."* This line brought attention to abusive relationships. *"Push me to the edge/ All my friends are dead."* The feelings he wishes to express are dark and moody, stating how alone and isolated he felt.



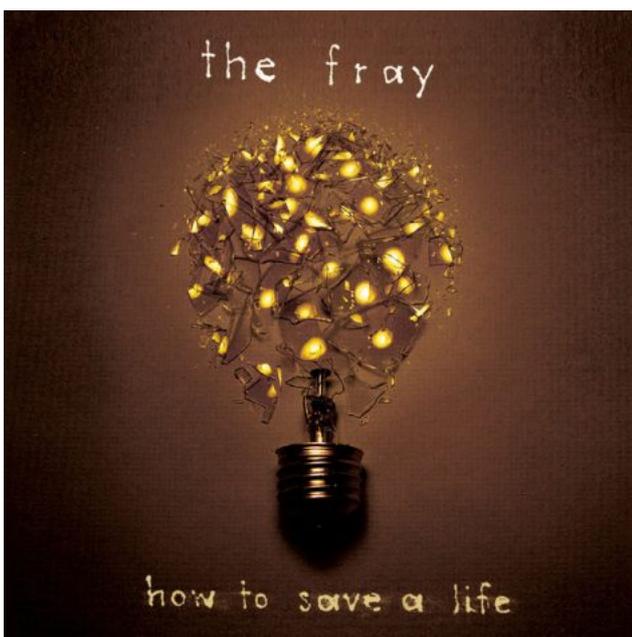
### **"1-800-273-8255" by Logic**

Acting as a message of hope and meaning, the track brings attention to suicide prevention. Featuring Alessia Cara and Khalid, they deliver their verses of encouragement and empathy to those who feel alone and are on the verge of suicide. In addition to this, they bring uplifting and emotional support to listeners to keep fighting. Logic's lyrics, *"I wanna feel alive / I don't even wanna die anymore,"* showcases that a story of tragedy and isolation can be changed.



### **"Phoenix" by A\$AP Rocky**

A song filled with painful and haunting beats, A\$AP Rocky reflects on the individuals that are driven to desperate lows. He first opens up his dark track rapping, "*Bloody ink on my pad spelled suicide.*" The rapper broaches the subject of suicide and being a victim to it. This somber track describes sadness to its highest point, "*You hurt so bad and you're going through so much pain to the point that sometimes you don't want to live no more.*"



### **"How to Save a Life" by The Fray**

A story of attempting to revive hope in others. The track brings attention to the necessary steps in helping others who are struggling to help themselves. The line, *“Try to slip past his defense,”* is a direct representation of individuals who are afraid to confide in others. The track’s lyrics are notably important, bringing attention to communication being the key to saving a life.

---

## **Stronger than depression**

I received prank calls. Unknown would call me, laugh, and say nasty things. I thought it would stop after a couple days, but I continued getting them for a good month. I didn’t tell anyone about this because I didn’t want to seem like a loser.

Eventually, the prank calls turned into online harassment through various social media apps. I would wake up to hateful or threatening messages telling me to “stay home”, “go die”, or that I “wasn’t wanted here.”

At first, I ignored them and continued on with my daily activities. Then, kids at school began to make comments and laugh as I passed by in the hallway. They judged me based on my appearance and actions. It eventually got to the point where I had to watch where I walked, looked around corners, and hope a friend would be nearby so I could have company.

Whenever I saw them, I would immediately turn in the other direction or try to find another quick route to get to my destination.

Days turned into weeks. The messages continued, and the

bullying at school as well. I began to believe what they said and accepted that I wasn't wanted here anymore. I often turned to self-harm as an outlet for my frustration.

A few friends tried to help me, but I didn't listen to them. I believed that I wasn't wanted here anymore and thought that by disappearing, I'd be doing everyone a favor. This was my mindset for the last few months of sophomore year, and I hated it so much.

There was no one I trusted fully or believed truly appreciated me for who I am, and I began hating myself so much because of that. I hated everything about myself from my looks to my talents. I threw away the mindset of "everything will get better". Nothing got better. My attitude only got worse, and the level of hatred I had for myself and this world gradually began to increase.

As if things at school weren't going bad enough, things at home began to get rocky too. I got into constant fights with my family members and argued for days and days over every single, small issue. It seemed as my family didn't care. They told me that something was wrong with me and others would soon see it too.

Finally, a good friend of mine reached out to me and assured me that people were there for me. I got connected to a group of friends who messaged me constantly to check up on me and to make sure I was never alone.

They prevented me from having thoughts about harming myself again. Through my support group and other methods of coping, I slowly began to appreciate myself more and saw the value of my worth.

Whenever things got hard, I would journal everything out. Spilling out everything, I found it was very helpful. I released my anger and sadness upon the pages of my journal.

I believe the causes of my depression or suicidal thoughts were due to my lack of self-confidence. Even before I was bullied, I lacked self-confidence from the beginning. I also was not open to receive help from friends. I ignored what they said, and wanted to go my own way, which was a dark path.

If you or someone you going through depression, suicidal thoughts or anxiety, just remember that you are not alone. There are others who go through this and overcome it. You can too. If a friend that is going through depression and rejects you, keep on checking up on your friend. Don't give up on that person.

My biggest advice is to find someone to talk to. It can be a trusted adult, or close friends, or even family. They are there for you and will support you and help you through this. Also, journaling helps very well with organizing thoughts and releasing your anger. Don't give in to depression. Don't let depression win. Find the sources available to you so you can overcome depression and look at depression and say, "No. I win."

---

## **Here are signs of depression to look for**

There is a difference between common sadness and clinical depression. Typical sadness comes and goes; it can be caused from drama, school, stress and being overwhelmed. However, depression is the constant feeling of hopelessness, anger, emptiness and sadness.

"A lot of times with depression, what you are seeing is a change in a person's behavior," Anne Brosnan, our school's

psychologist said. "That's an indicator that there is probably something wrong."

There are several things that can make someone to feel down. It could be a life-changing event, something that is greatly overwhelming, for example: divorce, changing schools or even a death.

Other times, there is no real explanation to why you feel depressed. "Sometimes too it can be other things that are harder to put your finger on. Sometimes it can be overwhelmed a lot of you guys are working really hard in advance classes and a lot going on," Brosnan said. "You're stressed in every which way."

There is nothing wrong with being diagnosed with depression and it is important to know if you are someone you know are showing serious signs of depression. Common signs of depression include sleep problems, loss of interest in usual activities, talking negatively, poor memory and attempt of suicide.

### **Sleep problems**

Depression can affect sleeping patterns. It can cause getting too much or too little sleep. It can be hard to get out of bed in the morning. You may wake up sad and lay in bed unable to figure out what is wrong.

Fatigue goes in hand with sleep and tiredness. During the day, serious exhaustion can interfere with daily activities. It differs from common tiredness from a long day. Fatigue is consistent and halts your motivation.

### **Loss of interests in usual activities**

It's possible to withdraw from activities one previously participated in and enjoyed. "They might start to withdraw and not want to spend time with their friends and family," Brosnan

said.

### **Change in eating habits and weight.**

There could be a change in appetite and eventually affect your health. Having a loss or gain in appetite could cause weight gain and loss. This could lead to anorexia, binge eating or bulimia. Depression can affect the digestive system and cause nausea, indigestion, diarrhea and others.

### **Talking negatively**

It's not uncommon for people to be negative and talk negatively about things. However, there is a difference when someone is talking about feeling worthless and helpless in a serious manner.

"They might start saying things to let you know that they feel hopeless, down or sad," Brosnan said. Sometimes, a depressed person does not want to tell another person directly how they feel. However, a serious sign is constant and serious talk about suicide and death.

### **Poor memory and concentration**

According to Healthline, depression can cause short-term memory and forgetfulness. Poor concentration may occur making it difficult to focus on tasks, thinking straight and decision making.

### **Prevent suicide**

A warning sign can be visible marks on their body which shows self harm. "One of the things people can do is give stuff away. Maybe if you knew somebody who had plans to go off to college and now they're not talking about college anymore and how life is so hopeless and how you're going not going to have a future," Brosnan said.

“What all the adults in the building know is that you want to air on the side of caution because once somebody is gone, they’re gone forever. I think it’s important to reach out to someone when they think there is something wrong, you don’t want to make a mistake in that case,” Brosnan said. “Maybe you are misreading the signal and maybe that person is fine but it is certain best to reach out and be sure about it.”

If you are or anyone you know is going through any of these symptoms, it is important that you seek guidance immediately. If you can not reach out to family members about your feelings, talk to your friends or trusted adult.

“If you are concerned about somebody you need to intervene right away because that person needs to talk to you and talk to somebody right away. You need to let an adult know you can go to your teacher or counselor,” Brosnan said.

Mrs. Brosnan is always open to talking with students who need guidance. An additional option is calling an anonymous hotline such as, 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

“There’s so many great resources in our community. You don’t need to be sad and you don’t need to be hopeless. The good thing about depression is that it’s very treatable and a lot of people feel better but you just have to do something about it. You have to speak up and you have to come forward,” Brosnan said.

There are people who want to and are willing to help you. You are never alone.

---

# Freshman Veronica Gonzalez's trip to Bolivia

Freshmen Veronica Gonzalez traveled to Bolivia for a two week period. During this time, she visited many of the country's attractions, such as Salar de Uyuni. Stretching more than 4,050 square miles long, it is a large salt flat that was left behind by evaporated prehistoric lakes.

"The rain covers the salt making a mirrored reflection of the sky," Gonzalez said.

Gonzalez describes Bolivia as a country with rich history, fascinating customs and landscapes that are out of this world, a country like no other. The heart of South America empowered Gonzalez to expand her horizons by dining on various foods that the country had to offer.

"I ate various varieties of dishes consisting of meat, one of the main ingredients of Bolivian food," Gonzalez said.

Despite its richness in minerals and resources, the country is South America's poorest. Poverty is widespread, however, this allowed for Gonzalez to appreciate her life and the basic commodities in the U.S.

"If you wanted water you had to boil it or buy bottled water because it wasn't very sanitized," Gonzalez said.

Despite facing these difficulties, Gonzalez wishes to go back to her home country and once again experience her culture firsthand.

---

# There's more to life than death

In recent years, the problem of suicide has become evident, especially with teenagers. The act of suicide has made its way into popular T.V. shows and novels which have a wide reach and influence on the teenage population. 12.5% of suicides a year are committed by teenagers.

The average number of people that attempt self harm in the U.S. is around one million per year. This can mean anything from cutting or burning yourself to pulling your hair out. Many people around the world judge others by their appearance. Whether they're "too fat", "too skinny", or even "too ugly".

People attempt suicide when they're unhappy with themselves or if they can't find the meaning of life anymore. They feel alone and can't find any way to help themselves, but here are some ways you can prevent someone from committing suicide.

There are plenty of ways to avoid suicide and self harm, one of which is the suicide hotline. The suicide hotline allows you to anonymously talk or text about the suicidal thoughts or issues you're experiencing. You can reach them by calling or texting the phone number: 1-800-273-8255.

Another way to prevent suicide is surrounding yourself with supportive friends. Being with your friends can keep you more occupied and can keep reminding you that people do care about you.

Another source to prevent suicide is going to support groups. There are many suicide support groups in the U.S. and you can find many near you. Suicide support groups allow you to talk freely with others that may be experiencing similar issues.

People should never feel like they're alone. If one of your

friends is experiencing suicidal thoughts or depression, you can help them by encouraging them to seek help. Once a trusted adult is involved, all that there is left for you to do is to be there for them. Suicide is one-hundred percent preventable. Speak up if you feel that someone could be harming themselves. You could save a life.

---

## **Sophomore Samantha Rodriguez travels to Cancun, Mexico**

From dusk till dawn, a sense of serenity is exactly what a five-day trip to Cancun, Mexico gave sophomore Samantha Rodriguez. Blessed with warm, turquoise waters of the Caribbean Sea and near perfect weather, Cancun's many resorts were a temptation the Rodriguez family could not resist. Rodriguez spent her days tanning under the sun's warm rays while exploring the sparkling, crystal clear waters that is the very reason that makes for the destination's popularity.

Rodriguez stated that she stayed at a resort called "Villas del Palmar". There, she got to experience the cultural roots of Mexico from being served the finest cuisine and from overall the provided entertainment.

"There were dance shows that had music showing traditional dances [and] Mariachi bands singing and fresh traditional food," Rodriguez said.

Her most favorite memory of her time spent in Cancun was a Mexican fiesta and dinner cruise at the "Xoximilco". Similar to a gondola in Venice, the means of transportation comes from

a unique trajinera boat that captured Rodriguez's mind. She was amazed at the 25-dish dinner and the overall ambiance of the place for it channeled the Mexican culture, customs, music, and food.

Rodriguez hopes to one day visit the vibrant city to once again experience its beauty and grandeur.

---

## **Freshmen Danny Salisbury's time in Puerto Rico**

While sitting on the deck of the cruise, freshmen Danny Salisbury was overtaken with a sense of adventure and mystery. He cannot wait for his voyage to Puerto Rico to begin. During his time in the foreign country, he and his family witnessed Puerto Rico. Despite its short duration, he made the most of his time by walking through the streets of a town. There, he passed by several shops that sold popular items in the country. This allowed him to get a glimpse of the different culture compared to the United States.

He stated that the capital, in particular, was one attraction that stuck out most to him.

"It is a place very close to my grandfather's heart," Salisbury said. "He was stationed there when he was in the military."

While walking through Puerto Rico, he states that he realized that the roads were not a safe place to be. Transportation was a safety concern due to residents generally not abiding to traffic laws.

“I witnessed one driver drive on the sidewalk to get around another car,” Salisbury said, made me realize how lucky I am to live in America.”

By travelling to different countries and growing accustomed to the daily lives of its locals, Salisbury stated that it helped him realize that the things he takes for granted are necessities that people in other countries highly sought after.

---

## **Junior Kenzie Gardner reminisces about time in Scotland**

Standing atop the high castles of Scotland, junior Kenzie Gardner took in the country’s endless, green landscape. For one week she visited the many attractions that Scotland had to offer, including Edinburgh, Glasgow, and the Scottish Highlands. Gardner was staggered not only by the little differences in culture but also by the sheer quantity of sights and activities that were exclusively there.

“Edinburgh is mostly a popular city, much similar to London or Paris since it also gets very crowded with people,” Gardner said. The city is best known for its ancient castles and fortresses. It is a lavish city lined with colorful gardens and elegant shops, including a vast number department stores that are not found in the United States.

Not only was Gardner impressed by the country’s deep roots in

history placed in the castles, but also by the simplicity of a local's farm she visited. There she saw animals, such as Border Collie puppies, goat, and sheep.

"The man used a tool to shed the sheep's fur off after many months of growing," Gardner said.

However, the country is not all farmland and rural parts.

Gardner appreciated her time in the country that contained both crowded cities and tons of farmland and hopes to visit again in the near future.

---

## **When home is between two different countries**

As a sense of warmth and security overwhelmed her, junior Alondra Gonzalez entered her family home in Mexico. She knows that to outsiders, her home country is best known for many things, ranging from tourist attractions and exotic, beach getaways. However, junior Alondra Gonzalez has a different outlook on the Spanish-speaking country.

"It's like a second home to me," Gonzalez said.

For 10 days in July, Gonzalez and her family stayed in Guadalajara. It is the capital city of Jalisco, a state in the western part of Mexico that many well-known Mexican icons originated from – including mariachi music and sombreros.

During her time, she experienced the culture at its highest point. She and her family went from traditional markets and other celebrations to different museums that informed her of the history of Mexico.

“The remarkable thing about this location is that the city is above ground, “ Gonzalez said, “whilst the streets of the city are underground in historical tunnels that were once used to transport water in and out of the city.”

Being immersed in the Mexican culture for almost two weeks was a change from the lifestyle she was used to back in America. She tasted everything that the city had to offer, from small food stands to fancy restaurants. She states that the food and the culture were all contrastingly different from that in Virginia.

Despite the many differences, she found the culture in Mexico gave her a different outlook on her everyday life in the U.S. She experienced no difficulties with socializing with the locals, Gonzalez felt right at home.

---

## **This is how students feel about traveling to Vietnam**

From the unforgettable rigid mountain range of Da Lat and the city streets around the country, senior Tommy Nguyen remembers it all. For four weeks, Nguyen stayed with his family in one of the well-known cities that the country has to offer: Ho Chi Minh City or better known to its locals as “Saigon”.

Dat Lat is known to be the highlight of Vietnam and is famous for its beautiful landscapes, such as waterfalls, hills and pine forests. Nguyen found Dat Lat to be a refreshing change of pace due to its distinct cold weather to the otherwise overbearing heat of Vietnam.

Despite the country's natural beauty, the inner streets of Vietnam are no safe place and Nguyen's safety was concerned at every turn. The only safety he had was his family and making sure not to stray too far from their presence.

"Vietnam is no happy place to be alone in," Nguyen said.

He states that it is best to avoid nightlife trouble and it is not an uncommon misfortune to run into robbers, smugglers, kidnappers, and rapists on one's way home after a night out.

Despite the intimidating and overwhelming first appearance that one may get out of Vietnam, Nguyen fell right in place with its culture, people, and lifestyle due to his own Vietnamese background.

Nguyen further explains about discovering the true levels of poverty and pollution that plague the streets. From this trip to discover his own cultural backgrounds, he found many differences and parallels from living in the United States and the third world country.

---

## **10 Hours, No Problem**

Whether you're an early bird, a night owl, or a permanently-exhausted pigeon, sleep is vital to your health and overall well-being.

When you're scrambling to meet the demands of a busy schedule, either because you're an IB candidate, student-athlete or a high school student, cutting back on sleep may seem like the only answer.

In your time of need, sacrificing an hour or two of much-

needed rest in order to get more done can sound like a reasonable trade-off. But this is anything but correct. According to the National Sleep Foundation, it is recommended for a normal teenager to receive at least eight to ten hours of sleep every night to function the next day.

It has been engraved in our brains since elementary school: sleep is important. However, very few of us make it a priority to get a minimum of eight hours daily.

According to the National Sleep Foundation, teens tend to have irregular sleep patterns across the week, typically staying up late and sleeping in late on the weekends.

It is important to assess the reasons or rather the causes of why you fall in the "sleep deprived group". Most would blame it on their heavy course load, sports, or other extracurricular activities.

Nevertheless, they are not the only factors that play into the quantity and quality of your sleep. Your lifestyle and your commitment to be successful in school play an important role in your sleeping schedule as well.

Procrastination can be a student's worst enemy. We all know the feeling.

Staring at the blank Word document for the essay due next week, yet not exactly hitting the 1,000-word count just yet. Saying to yourself, "I have more time, I'll do it tomorrow." Then before you know it, the due date is around the corner and the word count remains at zero.

"I always end up doing my work at the last minute right before it's due," sophomore and student-athlete Sam Phan said.

The Webster dictionary defines procrastination as the act "to put off intentionally the doing of something that should be done."

Instead of diving into our work right after it is assigned, we put it off to the side to complete at a later time period.

In doing so, creating more work for ourselves for the next following days.

This would then later cause us to pull all-nighters on a daily to catch up and to not fall behind.

"I rarely get any sleep in when I procrastinate," Phan said. Time management is the key to success. Get rid of temptation and don't mix work with play. The same principle applies to your laptop.

Concentration must be maintained. Watching Netflix while completing assignments or checking Snapchat or Instagram, are all examples of a long list that can take you from the "work" state of mind. Because once it's broken, it will be broken for the next hour or two.

In addition to procrastination, our decisions can also play a role in our sleeping habits.

The day your counselors come into your English classroom to choose the next school year's schedule is the day you make a mental contract with yourself.

You chose the classes, you have to do the work.

If you chose to take an extra Honors or IB course, already knowing you have a full plate of extracurriculars, it is your responsibility to keep up with the workload.

If teens naturally need more sleep, one solution oftentimes mentioned is to have school later. However, this would only cause the students to push their bedtimes later as well.

A teenager's natural sleep cycle is always going to be a conflict because we choose to let it be. We always need an alarm clock or our parents to wake us up on school days. We are like zombies in the morning, barely functioning from being sleep deprived.

Sleeping in class? It is all your fault. It is time to take responsibility for our actions that put us in these circumstances in the first place.

Stressing over school is normal, but stressing about not getting enough rest is a problem.

As long as you have the right time management skills and make the right decisions, eight to ten hours every night should be nothing to fuss over.

---

# Sleep deprived, we need more time

The bell rings at 8:10 a.m. everyday and by that time most of us are in our seats half asleep. We begin first period trying to stay awake, and some students sleep in their classes throughout the day.

To others this may seem like a reasonable time to start the schools day, 8 a.m. is not too early or late. However, so much happens before that. Some students wake up at 6 a.m. or 7 a.m. to get ready and catch a bus, walk or get in a car.

The time we wake up can't be changed. The only controllable factor students have is the time they fall asleep. Some students don't sleep at all. Who is to blame for our lack of sleep? The students? The start time?

"I sleep around 11:30 because I'm personally a night owl," junior Raymond Phan said. "In rare occasions where I don't get enough sleep, I'm immensely tired for the rest of the day."

The amount of sleep varies for each student. It could be argued that IB students or students with honors classes would be the ones lacking of sleep. The amount of assignments they receive is greater than non-honor students.

Additionally, the amount of time students have decreases if they are involved in extracurricular activities, especially sports.

Student athletes have to worry about spending six hours at school, followed by about two hours of practice immediately after school. Then they go home, shower and if they want to get the required eight hours of sleep, they should start their homework as soon as they get home.

Where in that time do they have time to relax? Also, they may have personal matters and responsibilities to deal with.

Throughout the year, there are major events that take place that require a large amount of effort and time from students. For example, fall and spring plays, music concerts, field trips, tutoring hours, jobs and community service. These activities require a lot of hours that we either choose to voluntarily or as part of a grade. In addition to homework due next class period, students have to fit in long-term projects into their schedule.

Students are sleep deprived due to the massive amount of homework for the most part. Typically, each class gives out some sort of homework or assignment due the next class period. There is also the projects, essays and tests we have to study for on top of those homeworks.

Sometimes life can get in the way and we need time for ourselves, family and friends. The only time we feel free to sleep late are Friday and Saturday nights. Sleeping late on a school night results in us drained of energy the next day.

“Last year because of current events I had 30 of minutes of sleep one night because I waited last minute. The next day, I felt like a zombie,” sophomore Hansol Yoon said. “I regret doing that because if I did it before hand I could have put more effort into the assignment and I would have gotten more time to sleep.”

Even if we do spend our time wisely on our homework, the time we are given still may not be enough. We have to sacrifice hours of sleep to maintain our grades and relieve stress.

How and when do we retrieve the hours of sleep lost? The next day after an all nighter, we are sleepy and droopy. Is there a point in going to school the next day when you sleep in class and can't focus?

At the end of a school day, we are students but we are human.

Having a massive quantity of homework may prepare us for college and our future, nevertheless we need a break.

If we are constantly working and stressing, how can we enjoy our youth ? Yes, we have to slowly develop strong work ethics and personality, but at the same time, this is the only time we can be a little reckless before we are become adults with a demanding job.