

First week as a fresher

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University is where the little bubble that we are so used to being in throughout our school and college life, starts to burst; we slowly begin to get a taste of the real world. It is a place of limitless opportunities, countless routes to take, and numerous things to explore. From my recent experience, hopefully I'll be able to give you a teaser trailer of the upcoming four or so years. This is how my first few days as a fresher went.

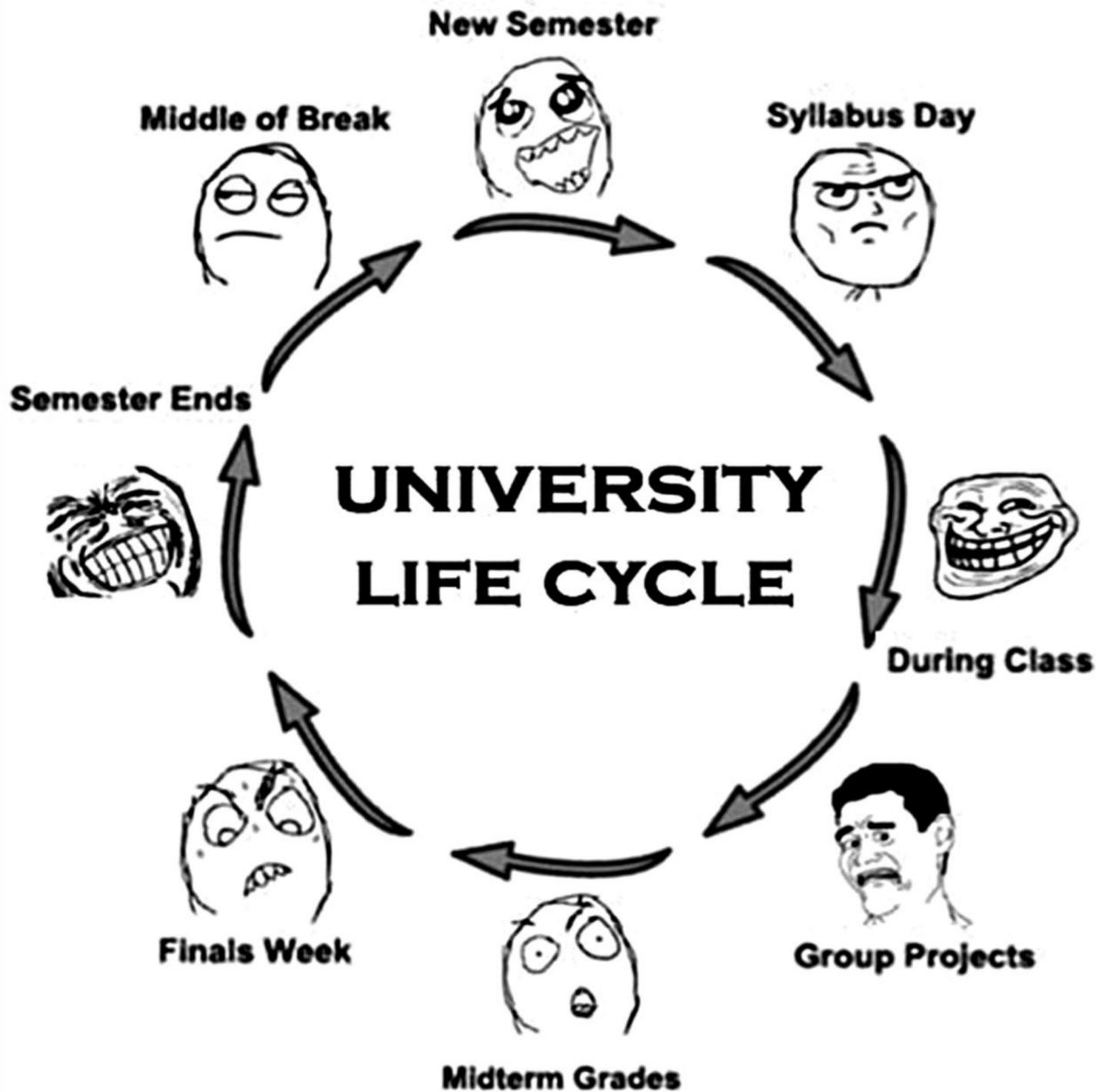
First of all, you'll realise it's just like your high school or college, but on a much bigger scale. More people, more courses, more events. You'll see more or less the same kind of people in your friend circle, experience the same panic before exams, and experience the same kind of classroom banter when your faculty is in a really good mood.

You'll also finally get or at least partially get that thing you have been craving forever since you first stepped into your teenage years – freedom. You can go in and out of your campus as you please, wander around, and eat whenever you want. Goodbye tiffin break. You won't have a guard come up to you and your friends, whistle obnoxiously, and signal you to get out at 2 pm. You are usually treated like an adult in class (depends on the faculty) and you get to make most of your own decisions. As a fresher, these very simple upgrades are what gave me the feeling of finally acquiring the big boy pants.

The social scene is what intrigued me the most. You'll be spending a few hours with a large number of people in a confined geographical location. These people come from all walks of life, from different educational, financial, social and even cultural backgrounds. This creates a comparatively diverse community on campus, something I found to be very interesting and delightful. Putting in effort to get to know people who are somewhat different from your previous group of peers will also enhance your socialisation skills – something that will come in very handy in various professional and personal situations in the future.

You'll also notice that the senior-junior relationship is another fundamental part of the on-campus social life. The exact nature of that relationship varies across different universities. The one I am going to is semester-based rather than year, and on a given course, students from different semesters often attend the same classes together. So many seniors are simply no different from your usual peers, and in many cases, the "seniority" is barely noticeable. There are some places in which the senior-junior gap is a little more well-defined. The notorious concept of ragging only strengthens this gap, but can also paradoxically make the juniors more comfortable in their interactions with their seniors.

Provided you enrol into a university with a large campus or an aesthetic architectural design, much of your first week will be spent exploring the area. You'll hear rumours and whispers in the wind about how there are some famous yet secret places on or around the



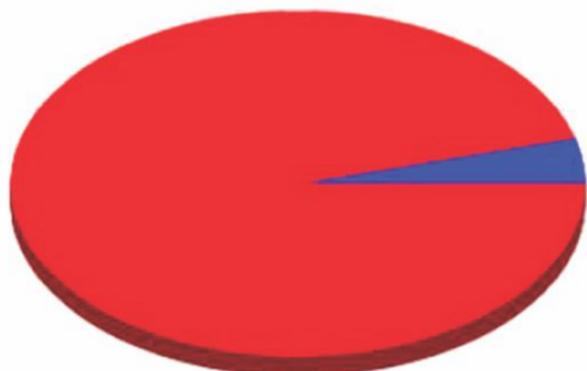
campus where people do certain "recreational" activities. If you're a Harry Potter fan, which I'm assuming you are because who isn't, this is your time to play Hogwarts.

One final observation I made is that we had finally grown up. I noticed my friends – even the ones who were all about bunking classes and enjoying the thug life(!?) – had started to care a lot about their future. It was no longer about simply getting the passing grades by cheating off the nerd next to them, just to live another day. It was finally time to prepare ourselves, to learn, to acquire valuable knowledge and skills and to maintain a good CGPA that will land us our dream job

after four years. Some, motivated by their recent success in being able to be enrolled at their university of choice, charge ahead with utmost confidence. While others bear shards of admission season disappointment and are determined to work hard and prove the society wrong.

Anyways, these were some of my observations during my first week at my university. Older and wiser people have always told me since my childhood days that these four years are going to be the best time of my life, so I'm quite excited about how it plays out. It'll most likely be the same for you. And as a fresher, that anticipation of the supposedly "golden years" is probably what matters more than anything else.

What I do when a teacher says "this cannot be done the night before"



- Adhere the warning and start early
- Take it as a personal challenge

