

First Impressions

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Adapted by Fishtank Staff

- 1 When I woke up on August 4, 2016, there was only one thing on my mind: what to wear. A billion thoughts raced through my brain as wooden hangers shuffled back and forth in the cramped hotel closet. I didn't want to come off as a try-hard, but I also didn't want to be seen as a slob. Not only was it my first day of high school, but it was my first day of school in a new state; first impressions are everything, and it was imperative for me to impress the people who I would spend the next four years with. For the first time in my life, I thought about how convenient it would be to wear the horrendous matching plaid skirts that private schools enforce.
- 2 It wasn't insecurity driving me to madness; I was actually quite confident for a teenage girl. It was the fact that this was my third time being the new kid. Moving so many times does something to a child's development . . . I struggled finding friends that I could trust would be there for me if I picked up and left again. But this time was different because my dad's company ensured that I would start and finish high school in the same place. This meant no instant do-overs when I pick up and leave again. This time mattered, and that made me nervous.
- 3 After meticulously raiding my closet, I emerged proudly in a patterned dress from Target. The soft cotton was comfortable, and the ruffle shoulders added a hint of fun. Yes, this outfit was the one. An hour later, I felt just as powerful as I stepped off the bus and headed toward room 1136. But as I turned the corner into my first class, my jaw dropped to the floor.
- 4 Sitting at her desk was Mrs. Hutfilz, my English teacher, sporting the exact same dress as I. I kept my head down and tiptoed to my seat, but the first day meant introductions in front of the whole class, and soon enough it was my turn. I made it through my minute speech unscathed, until Mrs. Hutfilz stood up, jokingly adding that she liked my style. Although this was the moment I had been dreading from the moment I walked in, all the anxiety that had accumulated throughout the morning surprisingly melted away; the students who had previously been staring at their phones raised their heads to pay attention as I shared my story. My smile grew as I giggled with my peers, ending my speech with "and I am very stylish, much like my first period teacher." After class, I stayed behind and talked to Mrs. Hutfilz, sharing my previous apprehension about coming into a new school and state. I was relieved to make a humorous and genuine connection with my first teacher, one that would continue for the remainder of the year.
- 5 This incident reminded me that it's only high school; these are the times to have fun, work hard, and make memories, not stress about the trivial details. Looking back four years later, the ten minutes I spent dreading my speech were really not worth it. While my first period of high school may not have gone exactly the way I thought it would, it certainly made the day unforgettable in the best way, and taught me that Mrs. Hutfilz has an awesome sense of style!