

Honest Effort in Hustle Culture

Today's high school students are praised for constant productivity and embracing the "grind." It's the prevalence of what's been deemed *Hustle Culture* – the belief that studying, working, volunteering, and chasing achievements must happen at all hours of the day. If you aren't juggling multiple commitments at once, you're at best falling behind and at worst sabotaging your future. This pressure-driven mindset can encourage the prioritization of outcomes over ethics. A topic whose influence can't be ignored, studies show the hustle culture among students often leads to burnout and can encourage cutting corners.

Scenario: Since freshman year, you've taken on a lot – schoolwork, sports, clubs, a part-time job, even a side hustle. Every commitment feels important, but the pressure to manage it all makes you feel like something has to give. Each role matters and stepping back feels like failure – your teammates count on you, your coworkers rely on your shifts, or your family depends on your income. Plus, everyone around you seems just as busy, and you don't want to fall behind. Now you may be tempted to take shortcuts: using AI for assignments, slacking in your sport, or letting peers carry the group project. Hustle culture pushes you to do more, faster, and rewards quantity over quality. When the expectation is constant productivity, does cutting corners feel less wrong?

For Your Response: Consider whether taking shortcuts is ever justifiable. Consider the implications of your decisions on yourself and others. Explain your reasoning with examples or observations from your life.