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## StageofLife.com Reports 34% of Teens Don't Like Prom



YORK, Pa., May 24, 2011 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Going to prom is a high school milestone, and prom traditions have been around for decades: Dresses. Dinner. DJ's. Dancing. For most teenagers, it's about celebrating life with friends and/or a significant other. However, there are also the negative aspects often associated with prom too: Drinking. Drugs. DUI's. Damaged self-esteem. Date rape.



(Logo: <http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20100929/DC73342LOGO>)

StageofLife.com, a blogging resource for high school students, Baby Boomers, and every life stage in between, wanted to know how teens really felt about prom. As part of its monthly teen writing contest series, StageofLife.com asked thousands of students the question, "Is prom a positive or negative high school tradition?"

Over 5,345 students from all 50 U.S. states and dozens of countries visited the site's [writing contest page](#) and scores of high school and college students submitted their thoughts about prom via a 500 word essay to the StageofLife.com website.

From the submissions, of which over 80 essays are showcased on StageofLife.com's [teen trends summary page](#), 51% of teens find the idea of prom positive and enjoy the activity, while 34% think it's negative/"dumb," and another 15% have a neutral view of prom. StageofLife.com also posed the prom question on its [Facebook Fan Page](#) and found more favorable results from a mixed audience of college and older individuals: 85% thought prom was a positive event, while only 15% said it was negative.

From the writing contest essay submissions about prom on StageofLife.com, five [key themes](#) and trends emerged:

**1. Rite of Passage:** Many teens felt that prom is a rite of passage and a high school milestone. Prom signifies the end of a high school career, more so than graduation.

One finalist, katimae, wrote, "I say that if going to prom can bring you that sense of completion, then what's the harm? We have the rest of our lives to be discontent with so many open-endings that will undoubtedly arise. If you're able to look past the stress, following the crowd and going to prom can be a major highlight of your younger years" in her essay [Prom: A Necessary Evil](#).

**2. Dangerous:** On the other hand, teens also felt that prom has lost its original intentions of being a relaxing night out. Many students wrote about the problems of excessive drinking, drug use, car accidents, date rape, pressure, and low-self esteem issues that prom can spur.

Finalist, Shana Zucker, of Deerfield High School, from Deerfield, Illinois, wrote in her essay [Prom: Is it really worth dying for](#), "Some girls dream of going to prom. 'I'd die to go to prom this year!' they exaggerate. Yet they forget that students have died on the night of a school dance. 'I'd do anything!' But is it worth it? The girls who aren't asked to the dance are left with wounded self-esteem and a low self-image; they starve themselves or binge in an effort to be skinny. Those who are asked will do anything to be cool, even if it means drinking and driving, doing drugs, or engaging in sexual behavior that they are not comfortable with. Even students who don't drink and drive can be hit by a car due to a student driver who didn't make wise decisions."

**3. Cost:** Almost everyone agreed that prom is an expensive tradition -- between the ticket, dress, and other accessories, some prom-goers spend \$300 or more to attend the event.

Teen Blogger, Callie Ridenour, wrote in her essay, [Prom: How Much is that Dress Really Worth](#), "Last year's expenses: the deep royal blue dress itself -- \$380, the delicate alterations on the beading of the straps -- \$75, the glittering stoned silver shoes -- \$125, the ever so stylish hairdo -- \$87, the French nail gels -- \$105, the aqua blue stone earrings and ring -- \$60, the silver bag that matched perfectly -- \$36, and lastly the ridiculous amount of gas used to drive all over New Jersey to find these things -- oh, somewhere around \$200. A year later as I'm beginning my frantic prom search again, I am disgusted with the amount of money I spent!"

**4. Safety:** Many teens agreed that prom needed to be safer, or that students needed to make better choices. Regardless, prom is about having fun with your friends; and if you stay away from dangerous decisions, you will probably have a good time.

Teen blogger, Priyanka Garigipati, of Clark High School from Plano, TX, wrote, "The excitement prom gives is like a drug itself that keeps you dancing on the top of mountain ecstasy. On the other hand, we tend to make stupid decisions. We expose ourselves to alcohol, sex, and drugs; the whole package in one night" in the essay [Prom: The Night of Doom](#).

**5. "A Night to Remember":** Interestingly, multiple teens titled their essays "A Night to Remember," which suggests that prom still has some sort of "magical" allure. Most teens wrote about the hype that is associated with prom; but teens were almost split on whether this hype was positive or negative.

Felicia Czochanski, of Metuchen High School, from Metuchen, NJ, a contest finalist wrote, "This year alone, I've seen my sisters

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Learn to navigate the world's

reading books such as Prom, and now Disney Channel has come out with a movie called "Prom". Expectations for prom are rising for young kids. By the time it's their turn to experience the big night, I'm afraid that it might not be everything they dreamed for. Next year I will be a junior, the first year I'll be able to attend and I'm so excited for the magic of the night. I've waited so many years to catch my own fairytale and I'll admit, my expectations are pretty high" in her essay [Prom: Catching a Fairytale](#).

College blogger, Kay Porter, of Stephen F. Austin State University from Nacogdoches TX, wrote, "Prom was wonderful for all of five minutes. After I realized these were just the people I went to school with, we were in our poorly decorated basketball gym that smelled of sweat, and my date was a guy that meant nothing to me, the magic of the prom was gone. Of course, I danced and laughed with my friends at the already drunk couples making fools of themselves but this was just me hanging out with my friends in expensive clothes: Nothing new. The night ended as it began with excitement for going somewhere, however, the excitement at the end of the night was I could finally go home, change into comfortable clothes, take out the torturous pins in my hair, and watch a bad romantic comedy with my sister" in the essay [Prom: A Truly Unmagical Experience](#).

StageofLife.com prom writing contest [finalists](#) were:

- Shana Zucker, Deerfield High School, from Deerfield, IL
- Priyanka Garigipati, Clark High School, from Plano, TX
- Julia Rhodes, Friends School, from Wilmington, DE
- Kay Porter, Stephen F. Austin State University, from Nacogdoches, TX
- Maxie Lindholm, Groves High School, from Southfield, MI
- Christine Fossaceca, Urbana High School, from Frederick, MD
- William Gage Dingeldein, Pelion High School, from Lexington, SC
- Hope Roberts, Rim of the World High School, from Crestline
- Felicia Czochanski, Metuchen High School, from Metuchen, NJ
- Aaron Englehardt, Greenville High School, from Greenville, SC
- Callie Ridenour, West Morris Mendham High School, from Chester, NJ

A full recap of the writing contest along with postings of the teen prom essays can be viewed at <http://www.stageoflife.com/prom.aspx>

StageofLife.com CEO, Eric Thiegis, added, "The majority of the student essays we had were quite positive. With titles like 'Time of My Life,' 'A Day to Remember' and 'My Date With Mr. Amazing,' reading many of these essays brought me back to my senior prom 20 years ago... which is important to me because my date later became (and is now) my wife!"

#### May 2011 Writing Contest for High School Students

This month's [writing contest for high school students](#) on StageofLife.com asks the question, "What was the most difficult thing you overcame this school year?"

Entries will be accepted up till May 30th at Midnight PDT and the essay winner will receive a gift card/cash prize from prize sponsors like [KodakGallery.com](#), StageofLife.com SWAG, and featured writing status on the site.

StageofLife.com works with thousands of bloggers from all stages of life along with its sponsors, like [Mint.com](#) et al, on its mission of making the world a better place, one story and one resource at a time.

About Stage of Life®: [StageofLife.com](#) is a free, non-partisan, grassroots blogging community that hosts stories, information and resources for teens, Millennials/Gen Y, Gen X, and Baby Boomer generations. Its specialized content allows users to share and archive their life stories. StageofLife.com also touts [free lesson plans](#) and writing prompts for Language Arts teachers, monthly [writing contests](#), blogging resources, a platform that [helps people promote their blogs](#), [teen trends analysis](#), custom news feeds for each stage of life, and much more. The site also features [My Life Rewards](#), relevant coupons and discounts exclusively geared towards each stage of life as StageofLife.com works to provide, "Rewards for Life's Journey®."

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