

Make it or break it

Sophomore's first AP test becomes **intense experience**

—by Hannah Mohr

The morning alarm, set to ring earlier than normal, blared in Azalea Norwood's ears. Staying up as late as she could, flipping through notes, Norwood didn't get near enough sleep, and it showed in her slow reaction. With the alarm still sounding, Norwood groggily opened her eyes and stared up at the ceiling.

Her eyelids felt heavy, but the day would feel heavier. In Norwood's sleepy thoughts, she could already feel the intensity. The day was about one thing, and one thing only: her first AP World History exam.

The exam made Norwood feel unusually anxious, but it was an understandable nervousness. The test she was about to take would make or break her year in the class.

In hopes of beating testing jitters, Norwood got to the school early, before the lights were on in the hallways.

"What's the possibility of failing?" Norwood thought. "Would I fail the entire class?"

That morning, Norwood felt distracted. Rather than filling the time with practice questions as she had hoped, her own thoughts distracted her.

"Will I have to drop out and move down to the regular class?" she questioned herself.

Norwood could barely focus, and before she knew it, her practice time was over. She sighed, slowly rose to her feet, grabbed her bag and walked to her first class of the day. She felt like and walked like a zombie.

Later in the morning, on her way to AP World, Norwood still found herself walking hesitantly. She hoped that her pace might slow down time and keep the test from ever coming. Eventually she walked in and sank into her seat.

Normally, Norwood thought of her teacher and a kind teacher, but today, he felt more like a prison warden. When he handed out tests, which felt like a unjust punishment, Norwood's hands shook. But it wasn't long before the mood changed. After picking up her test and scanning the first few questions, Norwood became ready to start filling in the bubbles on the sheet.

"The first few questions were pretty easy," Norwood thought. "I know all of this."

A sudden burst of confidence pushed Norwood through the remainder of the test, and before she knew it, she sat with an odd sense of certainty about AP World History and the exam.

As the last test was turned in, Norwood's teacher announced that the test grades would be available after lunch. For Norwood the 30 minute lunch felt as slow as the morning felt fast. Wanting to tell everyone to just hurry and get going, Norwood had to take a deep breath and wait until the lunch bell sounded. Then, she dashed to class, and she waited in her seat, upright and anxious for everyone to arrive.

"Your grades are posted online," her teacher said.

Quickly, everyone grabbed their phone and checked. Azalea felt a bead of sweat on her brow as Home Access loaded, and then it was there. Norwood gazed at the 97 posted next to the assessment. Hearing groans around her, she tried to mask her happiness for the sake of others. One goal down, Norwood thought, "I'm pretty sure I'm going to survive the year."