

Feature Article Years 10 – 12: Schoolies Rules

Schoolies Rules

Ask any school leaver. Schoolies Week has become a modern rite of passage. Sebastian Penn reports.

Is that a rite or a right? Certainly school leavers seem to believe that they deserve an all-out celebration at the end of twelve or thirteen years of school. So don't expect this mega indulgent festival to disappear in the near future.

Because it's become an institution, Schoolies has become more regimented and better controlled than in its early years. There is a large police presence, as well as council, community groups and volunteers who organise alcohol-free activities on the beach, day and night. And there have even been some positive spin-offs.

When Schoolies began in the 1980s, there was little organisation or support for teenagers. This led a priest from the Oblate Order, Paul Costello, to found Rosie's Youth Mission to support young people. Now Rosie's has branched out into other areas, including support for the homeless.

There's also a website now that provides information on all aspects of Schoolies Week. Here Schoolies are made aware of the consequences of underage drinking and the other pitfalls of post-school partying.

One survey conducted after the celebration suggests that alcohol abuse is more common among males than females, with an average of 52.3% of males admitting to being drunk every day of the Schoolies Week. Figures relating to casual sexual partners and drug abuse are much more conservative.

Yet, a number of girls interviewed after Schoolies Week admitted to being the victims of sexual assault. Melissa (not her real name) said: "I hooked up with Nathan and went back to his place. He forced himself on me, but he was pretty wasted, so I pushed him out of the way and ran home." Not all girls escaped as easily as Melissa. Now that information is readily available how to avoid both non-consensual sex

Catchy headline using assonance

Subheading provides angle or point of view; byline

Hypothetical question to hook readers and angle / point of view

Language choice is mainly informal

Uses mainly present tense

Variety of long and short sentences

Historical background

Contractions are acceptable (eg. *There's*)

Facts or evidence validates the writer's viewpoints

Relevant jargon adds authenticity to information and opinions presented

Use of anecdotes as a direct quote maintains interest and personalises the topic

and drink spiking, incidents like these should be less common.

So, even if Schoolies seems like an extravagant pagan ritual to parents and the older generation, every year it becomes more of a permanent fixture. And now that the term “Schoolies” has recently been legitimised by making its way into the Oxford English Dictionary, there is certainly no turning back.

Figurative language may be used to engage the reader’s imagination (eg. *like an extravagant pagan ritual*)

Conclusion links to introduction and angle of the article

From: Housden, E (2010) Senior Text Types: a writing guide for students. Farr Books, Queensland, page 23.