

Thank you Alison for the introduction. [PAUSE B] Hello everyone! I feel tremendous pride and honor to be a part of this special occasion. Before I begin I want to thank all the faculty, staff, teachers, and coaches that have been a part of Upper Perk High School--what a long, strange trip it's been. I would also like to thank friends and family for making these four years everything that they were. [PAUSE B]

Delivering a speech for this incredible student body is an honor. To encompass four years of craziness would be quite complex. Frustrated, I texted my brother Bryce and asked "If you could speak at graduation what would you talk about?". To be fair, this was a loaded question. Within a few minutes, he responded and said "I still need to know what my debit card's security code is". [PAUSE S]. Thanks Bryce, you're loads of help. Then, I turned to my mom who is my family's matriarch, and a math teacher who has seen plenty of graduations. She told me to compare gas prices and go on stage wearing a fan on my head with a mask on to make fun of the infamous covid zooms. Not to mention, all my friends wanted a special shout-out for them in this speech. [PAUSE B] I guess you could say I did not have a lot of strong ideas. All these wild topics and searching for what to talk about lead me to the simple word gratitude.[PAUSE S]

Gratitude is focusing on what's good in our lives and being thankful for the things we have and memories we have made. [PAUSE B]

Let's right now focus on what's good in our lives -- being here together for one last time as a class, all having graduated with dreams, hopes and expectations for our futures. Let's smile for the memories we have made at this highschool and are currently making right here, right now, on this beautiful June evening with family and friends. [PAUSE B] Once we leave the halls of this high school, life will be forever changing and none of what we have in this moment will remain how it is. Circumstances will change, relationships will change, and the pace of life will take off more than it already has. [PAUSE B]

Therefore, now more important than ever, be grateful for those who surround you, be grateful for the staff who have helped you, and be grateful for family who have helped us keep it all together. [PAUSE S] Find those people in your life, thank them, and appreciate all that they have done because after we leave this field tonight, we are entering a new, ever changing trip. For me, thank you Mr. Leskusky for actually helping me write this speech and being a great mentor. And Thank you Mr. Moyer for being an admirable teacher K through 12. [PAUSE B]]

Have an attitude of gratitude. I hope I and all of us will remember: As a poet once said: "It takes NO more time to see the good side of life as it does to see the bad." See and remember the good.

Thank you and congratulations to the class of 2023!

I would now like to introduce our class president and last student speaker Isabella Lara to the podium.