

Hello graduates, families, friends, loved ones, and our wonderful teachers and administration. My name is Giavanni. As excited as I am to be giving this speech, I was a little disappointed that COVID has made it impossible for me to hear the roaring laughter that my impeccable jokes prompt .... ah there it is. Prepare for more of that, because I am notorious for turning every situation into an excuse for jokes. The first thing I would like to say is a tremendous thank you to everyone who has made this 12-year journey possible for my class. Any and all helpers along the way have contributed to the people we are today and the successes the future holds for us. We appreciate all you have done for us, more than you know. For me, two of my biggest supporters have been my mom, and my brother. Oliver, thank you for being my first and best friend. Mommy, thank you for being the light of my life. Now, I'd like to talk a little about myself. If you know me, or probably even if you don't, there are three things that are clear about me. The first is that I love Spanish. You might be groaning right now because you've probably heard me talk about Spanish a thousand times before. However, this isn't just an excuse to practice my verb conjugation. Sorry Señor, the conjuguemos will have to wait. For me, Spanish is an outlet of creativity. It fuels me to connect with people from other countries and cultures. It inspires my artwork, my relationships, my future. None of this would have been possible without Hanover High. During my freshman and sophomore years, I had Spanish with Señora Prendergast. If you've ever had her before, you know how difficult that is. Despite my horrendous accent and lack of conversational skills, Señora praised my efforts and encouraged my passion for the language. When junior year rolled around, she implored me to

participate in the Spanish exchange. So, in March of 2019, I traveled to Spain with a group of fellow hhs students and three teachers. Señora was, of course, one of these chaperones. This trip changed my life. I fell in love with Spain in all of its aspects. Ever since, Spanish has pushed me to be a more accepting and adventurous person and has provided countless opportunities in many facets of my life. Spanish has proved to be a constant in my life when other things were uncertain. It has helped me learn that working hard at something can result in mastery and the endless possibilities that come with it. My point in telling this story is to encourage my fellow graduates to find the spark in their lives. Find the thing that makes you excited to wake up in the morning, the thing that inspires you to work harder each and every day. Hold on to this and fight for it with all of your heart. This spark helps keep you going even in your darkest moments.

Spanish might not seem very interesting to some people, but take a class with profe and it definitely will be. Hhs has helped me not only find this spark, but it has also nurtured it and enabled my success through it. The second thing you might know about me is that I am a big advocate of positivity. Whether this is in the form of positivity for others or for yourself, I think it is one of the most important parts of having a good life. One of the biggest positive influences in my life has been my physics class. Mrs. Benedict never fails to bring a smile to my face, even when she assigns us a worksheet that I have 0 understanding of. Even with the school closure and all of the negativity that has come with corona, Benny has been there to get her students through. I think this fierce dedication to bringing a little sunshine into each student's life is an admirable quality that represents HHS's mission. Supporting each other and being kind is a necessary

part of being in a community. Through my time at Hanover High, I have learned to appreciate the small positive aspects of life. A smile from someone in the hallway, a sunny day, a cookie from Mel at the caf. It is these moments that remind me how important positivity is in my life. In recognizing this, I have learned that taking time out of my day to spread this kindness is more than worth it. I hope that in joining the crazy adult world, my classmates and I will continue to take the time to be positive, for ourselves, and for our society. Sometimes, a little sunshine is what we need most. The third thing you might know about me is that I love to laugh. If I had been giving this speech in front of you all, I probably would've started laughing when you did, and I wouldn't have stopped. I'd like to consider myself a pretty funny person. In fact, during March Intensive this year, Dr. Gamble asked me if I had ever considered stand up. I promptly told him that I preferred sitting down. But the reason I bring this up is not to flaunt my ability in the humor department. I think that being able to laugh is one of the most precious things in life. As I went through high school, laughter was an integral part of my success. My relationships with teachers, peers, coworkers, and community members thrived on the moments of laughter we shared together. Laughter helped me as I struggled with mental illness, and I watched as my passion for making others laugh lessened their struggles as well. Laughter, just like positivity, is a constant light in the sea of darkness that sometimes engulfs me. Another important thing to remember as we navigate this uncertain world is that it is okay to laugh at ourselves. We will make mistakes and they will be humorous, but in the end, we'll grow from them. Appreciate the laughable experiences. Your enjoyment in life will increase exponentially if you don't

take yourself so seriously. Graduates, I know this isn't the senior year we expected. COVID has made our senior spring less than enjoyable. Although in the grand scheme of things, it isn't a huge deal that we don't get to experience the last part of our high school career traditionally, we are allowed to be sad. As I learned from Mr. Haehnal, the worst does not negate the bad. It is okay to mourn this loss, and our feelings are valid. But as we close this chapter of our lives, I think we should take this experience and grow from it. Thousands have passed away from this terrible disease, but we are here and we are entering a new phase of life. In my opinion, it would be unfair to those who have lost their lives, those who are risking their lives, and anyone else who has been affected by this crisis to resign ourselves to seeing this as the worst end to high school. To come out of this pandemic, and continue on, full of love and kindness, is something we shall all strive to do. I have faith in us. We are lucky to have received such an incredible education, and we now must take what we have learned and apply to our lives. Whether that is in college, a gap year, a job, or whatever path you have planned, take this unfamiliar, frightening time and use it to improve yourself as a person. Consider the changes you want to make in yourself and in your community. Our future is not defined by who we are today, and I hope this speech has provided some insight into what I believe we are all capable of becoming. Class of 2020, we made it. There were some bumps along the road, but we're here. When this craziness is over, I hope to see you all in person to celebrate. This is school is a part of us, and we will be back. Thank you, and congratulations.