

Konnor Fortini, a lower at Phillips Academy (n.)

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ENG200: The Writer

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Konnor Fortini, a lower at Phillips Academy(n.): Definition and Sensory Markers

Konnor Fortini is a lower at Phillips Academy Andover, a tenth-grade student in an academic program designed to build on the foundation laid in his Junior year. Konnor speed-walks from Falls to Bulfinch with last year's backpack, lighter now because his shoulders have finally learned to bear the weight. He has a pizza in one hand, its warmth contrasting with the cold wind, and a pencil in the other, trying to balance both without dropping either. He *huffs*, *puffs*, and *wheezes*, knowing ENG200 starts in two minutes, but he just crossed Main Street

Konnor Fortini, a lower at Phillips Academy (n.): Bounds, Rules, & Purpose

To be Konnor at Phillips Academy is to live on a campus he can finally cross on muscle memory, yet still feel the edges of unfamiliarity. The boundaries of his world expand with the introduction of new students, new teachers, and new expectations. He sets a second alarm for initial sign-in so he receives fewer restrictions; he chooses to tighten his routines and focus on academics. These decisions outline how he moves; he's in the dorm by 9:30 PM and doing work by 9:31.

Lower year sharpens Konnor's many interests into clearer forms: electives, chosen routines, and real commitments. He shifts from "Do I really have to take ART225? It sounds so boring," to "The cryptography course is interesting to me. I'll request it."

As a lower, he faces specific rules and limits. There are still study hours at 8 PM, an in-room 11 PM deadline, a strict room visitation policy, and a final sign-in that is earlier than those of upperclassmen. Konnor has limited freedom in scheduling and few leadership positions, and is confined to areas such as Empathy, Balance, and Inclusion (EBI). At 10 AM, the EBI facilitator says, "Turn to someone you *don't* know and share a rose, a thorn, and a bud." Chairs

scrape, Konnor sighs, pairs form. A few minutes later, the EBI Senior asks: “When was the last time you felt truly seen at Andover?” A timer beeps, and Konnor acts out a scenario about “inclusive decision-making.” The skit concludes with a fake dorm meeting where one kid stands in the corner as a lamp, and someone yelling, “Let’s validate everyone’s feelings!”

On his usual Friday morning walk from GW to Morse to deliver *The Phillipian* newspapers, the stretch of the Great Lawn feels the same way it does every day to him, no matter the term: 30 degrees with 15-mile-per-hour winds that sting the ears. It’s the specific kind of cold Konnor feels while speed-walking to an 8:30 AM class right after practicing piano, clutching a banana and whispering to himself, “Did you finish the math homework?”

Konnor Fortini, a lower at Phillips Academy (n.): Habits & Tools

For Konnor, this is the first time his days are no longer micromanaged by adults. Assignments accumulate, practice schedules shift, club meetings collide, and suddenly the week becomes a puzzle only organization can solve. By October, Konnor can spot a scheduling conflict at a glance, ever since he signed up for Pine Knoll Cluster Council at the exact same time as scheduling his own presentation for the Andover Economics Society (AES) about scarcity and prices, creating a mess that resulted in him going to Sykes and telling both parties, “I’m sick.”

He grids the day in Google Calendar: classes, conference periods, sports practices, clubs, and homework sessions. Color-coding is essential for him: red is for math, blue is for English; history incorporates a lighter tone of blue, while Spanish is more of an orange. The sound of the iPhone’s “Radial” alarm is ingrained in his mind. *Ring, ring, ring*: the alarm pops up in perfectly timed intervals. One says at 2:55 PM, “Time to head to your two-hour practice right after class,”

and another at 7:30 PM: “Start history reading.” During conference period, he swipes through his calendar, searching for narrow time slots between obligations. He drags his events fifteen minutes forward, then back, until a sliver appears. However, just as the perfect schedule is created, a faculty member appears from around the corner and pockets his phone.

Konnor Fortini, a lower at Phillips Academy (n.): Standards & Cadence

Higher standards in both classes and social conduct make “lowering” that much harder. Konnor must actually read the syllabus, turning the “Wait, we had homework?” from Junior year into a nerdy “This counts for approximately 6.7% of my grade” (small assessments tip term grades). Lower year involves more conversation with teachers in and out of class. An email that would be “hi sorry can i get an extension por favor” in Junior year becomes “Dear [Teacher], I hope this message finds you well. I am writing, 24 hours in advance, of course, to request an extension...” He starts caring about honorifics and examines a professor’s LinkedIn, exclaiming, “Yikes, I’ve been calling my house counselor Mr. all of freshman year. I did *not* know he held a PhD.” For him, scheduling Tuesday’s homework is no longer based on vibe-based-decision-making; it becomes “From 7:18 to 7:41, I annotate my HSS201 reading. 7:42-8:32: English reading. 8:32 to 9:15, when the library closes: Spanish.”

The configuration of his daily life is consistent and structured. A typical lunch period starts with him sprinting from SPA621 at 12:00 into work duty at 12:05 to give a tour to a prospective student. The sweat that accumulates from his hurry makes it a struggle as the cold, fall air freezes it across the back of his neck. He slows his breathing before stepping into the Shuman lobby with a practiced smile. The prospective family never sees the mad sprint beforehand; only the polished version where Konnor pretends he didn’t just jog 100 yards to

arrive on time. Then, in the evening, club meetings squeeze into the only slivers of time: a 6:00 PM Andover Economics Society presentation, a 7:00 PM Philomathean Society debate, followed by the quiet thud of his backpack hitting the library floor as he finally settles back into schoolwork.

At times, he fails to meet some of these measures. He oversleeps alarms after late-night study sessions and comes to English class late, accidentally forgets to do a HSS201 reading he swore he'd finish, or even shows up to practice with the wrong gear. But even in these moments, sprinting from Fuess House to Bulfinch, hoping that 8:50 AM won't be considered late, or frantically skimming a reading before class, or even apologizing to a coach, there's a kind of forward motion. He recalibrates, tries again, and gradually develops better habits.

Konnor Fortini, a lower at Phillips Academy (n.): Characteristics, Limits & Definition

Being Konnor means imagining a "perfect version" and implementing it in the small choices: staying for an extra half-hour in the library, raising a hand in a class where he feels everyone is more intelligent than he is, and choosing which club actually matters when schedules collide.

"It's time to head up to your room," a house counselor says; restrictions are part of the school's system to maintain order. Yet, similarly, Konnor also sets his own self-imposed bounds, ones that signal overcommitment. He stacks his schedule with *The Phillipian*, the Philanthropy and Investment Club, and the Innocence Club. It becomes a three-hour sprint between rooms in the library, from the Freeman Room to CLC119 and then to CLC118. He says yes to any opportunity because "the years that really count start here," says every online college counselor. His only free hour is spent tutoring MTH275 to a student in their dorm before he has mastered

the subject himself. Under the table, he secretly Googles “What is a perpendicular bisector?” on his phone. These restraints, though sometimes frustrating, make him stop snoozing the 7:30 alarm.

Lower year defines Andover as much as Andover defines Konnor. He is no longer new but not yet in leadership roles; he is finding his place, testing ideas, and learning to contribute meaningfully. The properties of Konnor as a lower can be seen as he waits in line for 5th period lunch at Paresky. His phone buzzes with a notification: “Wrestling starts at 3:30 and ends at 5:15.” Mr. Robinson, his chemistry teacher, is in front of him and asks, “Hey, are you ready for the test tomorrow?” with his voice drowned out by the sizzling grill. Behind him, a friend whispers, “Are you still coming to Econ at 5:30?” He nods once, shifts his plate to his hip, and drops an “AES” block over where “Dinner” was on his Google Calendar.