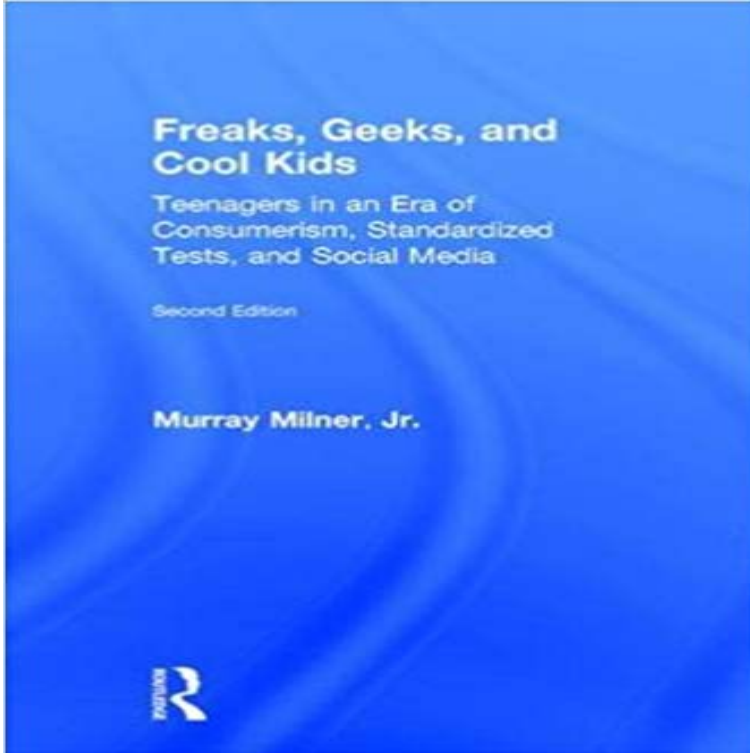


# Freaks, Geeks, and Cool Kids: Teenagers in an Era of Consumerism, Standardized Tests, and Social Media



In *Freaks, Geeks, and Cool Kids: Teenagers in an Era of Consumerism, Standardized Tests, and Social Media*, Second Edition, award-winning sociologist Murray Milner tries to understand why teenagers behave the way they do. The first edition drew upon two years of intensive fieldwork in one high school and 300 written interviews about high schools across the country, where he argued that consumer culture greatly impacts the way our youth relate to one another and understand themselves and society. Milner now expands on that concept with a new year of fieldwork fifteen years after he began. He has uncovered in teens a move away from consumerism and towards the cultural capital of information in a time of social media and standardized tests. What people said about the first edition: Milner has done more than perhaps any other American sociologist to remind us that status remains a primary mode of stratification, one that is dependent upon cultural, material power. *Freaks, Geeks and Cool Kids* is exemplary sociological research and theory; it is wise, witty, and often touching as well. --Jeffrey C. Alexander, author of *The Dark Side of Modernity*, Professor of Sociology, Yale University A rare book! Social science at its best, yet full of messages for parents, educators, and anybody who cares about the next generation. ---Amitai Etzioni, author of *My Brothers Keeper: A Memoir and a Message*, University Professor, The George Washington University, and Past-President of the American Sociological Association Milner explains why high school cliques have so much power and can inflict so much pain. Anyone who cares about adolescents?parents, teachers, principals, and teenagers themselves?should definitely read this book. I couldnt stop reading it, and cant wait to discuss it with my students. It is sociological analysis at its

best! --Caroline Hodges Persell, co-author of *Preparing for Power: Americas Elite Boarding Schools*, and Professor of Sociology, New York University. Pre-publication responses to the revised edition: This is the best book ever written on American schools and teenagers. With thorough research across many kinds of schools, Milner spells out a general theory that explains why high school kids create their own caste system. --Randall Collins, author of *Violence: A Micro-sociological Theory*, Professor of Sociology, University of Pennsylvania, and Past-President of the American Sociological Association Milners work takes teenagers seriously as social actors. Rather than hand-wringing about whats wrong with kids today, *Freaks, Geeks, and Cool Kids* offers discerning, theoretical analysis that reveals the broader social processes that animate contemporary teen culture. With the second edition, Milner brings his keen insight to understanding the new status pressures faced by teens growing up in an era of ubiquitous social media and high stakes testing. --Markella Rutherford, Associate Professor of Sociology, Wellesley College, author of *Adult Supervision Required: Private Freedom and Public Constraints for Parents and Children*. *Freaks, Geeks and Cool Kids* is as fresh and informative today as it was when it was first published. Murray Milners incisive analysis of American teen culture and practices remains an indispensable reference point for anyone seeking to take the study of status, hierarchy and exchange in contemporary life forward into new directions. --Daniel Thomas Cook, author of *The Commodification of Childhood*, Professor of Childhood Studies Department of Childhood Studies Rutgers University-Camden One of the rare academic books that is both theoretically rich and easily readable for both academics and students, this detailed study of high school culture shows that for youth who have little individual economic or political power, cultural tastes and experiences become the basis for status distinctions.

--Paul Kooistra, Furman University, author of *Criminals as Heroes: Structure, Power, and Identity Through up-close observations of the day to day lives of high school students*, Milner deftly demonstrates how complex and persistent systems of status buttress a culture of consumerism, both consistent with and at odds with the broader society. The book joins a distinguished set of sociological studies of teenage culture, while being accessible to a broader readership. --Dr. David Bills, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, University of Iowa, Past-editor of *Sociology of Education*. *Freaks, Geeks, and Cool Kids* provides a rare glimpse into the world of high school students. Understanding their behaviors as resulting from a near-constant pursuit of status, Milner not only explains teens obsession with peer relations and being cool, he also describes their role in the development and maintenance of consumer capitalism. Methodologically rigorous and theoretically elegant, *Freaks, Geeks, and Cool Kids* is a modern sociological masterpiece. --Professor James Hawdon, Professor and Director, Center for Peace Studies and Violence Prevention, Virginia Tech, co-author of *The Causes and Consequences of Group Violence: From Bullies to Terrorists*. *Freaks, Geeks, and Cool Kids* is an insightful analysis into the lives of American teenagers and why they behave the way they do. Murray Milner uses engaging narratives to skillfully bring into focus how teenagers, with no real economic or political power, carefully cultivate status systems to maintain their position amongst peers, in school, and consumer capitalism. It should be required reading for anyone who wants to understand youth culture in the 21st century. --Bhavani Arabandi, Assistant Professor of Sociology, Ithaca College

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