

# LEARNING TO STUDY



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Students, why do you have to study? Is it to pass examinations? To get better marks? To satisfy your curiosity? To earn the appreciation of your parents and teachers? To build a basis for your future career and success? To know yourself, know other people and your surroundings? You can be highly motivated, I believe, to study if you are interested in and work hard at your subjects and develop sound habits of study. If you are poorly motivated, if your parents and teachers do not encourage you enough and you do not know how to manage your studies; if you have difficulty to think and to plan on your own or if you lack goals, ambition or a sense of purpose in life, this article will provide you some ways and means of learning to study.

## A MAGICAL FORMULA

Some years ago, a famous magician was invited to give a performance. He kept his young audience in awe of his magical feats. He had many admirers. One bright-eyed girl asked, "Sir, is there a magical formula for study?" The magician answered, "Yes, there is one. But you won't believe me if I tell you." Everyone shouted, "We will, we will believe." The magician answered with conviction, "There is only one magical formula for study, HARD WORK." And with that he turned on his heels and vanished into thin air.

## TIME FACTOR IN YOUR STUDY

My grandma, with not much to do, spent a full day in just writing and dispatching a postcard to her niece. She took about an hour to find the postcard, another hour in hunting for her spectacles, an hour and a quarter to write the message, another twenty minutes to find and stick the gum, another half an hour to decide whether or not to take an umbrella when going to the post office in the next street. She went out finally, returned deathly tired, and decided she needed to rest for the next two days.

**Reflection:** How much time do you need to get down to study?

## ONE THING AT A TIME

The clock master was about to fix the pendulum of a clock. Suddenly, to his surprise, he heard the pendulum speak, "Please sir, leave me alone. It will be an act of kindness on your part. Think of the number of times I will have to tick

day and night for so many hours. In every second, 60 seconds a minute, 60 minutes an hour, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, for years after years... millions of ticks. I could never do it." But the clock master answered wisely, "Don't think of the future? Just do one tick at a time and you will enjoy every tick for the rest of your life." And that is exactly what the pendulum decided to do. It is still ticking merrily away.

**Reflection:** Should we also, concentrate on one thing at a time?

## ATTITUDE TOWARDS LEARNING

A teacher had a lot of trouble with a boy. "Say A," asked the teacher. The boy just raised his head and shook it back and forth clamping his lips together. The teacher exercised patience and started again, "You are such a nice boy! Please say A. It won't hurt you." The only reply was an empty stare from the boy. Finally, after many attempts, the teacher lost her patience, "Say A," she screamed. But the boy's reply was only, "Mmm hmmm". At that point, the teacher summoned the boy's father. Together they implored the boy to say A. Finally, the boy gave in and produced a clear and beautiful A. The teacher, surprised by this pedagogical success cried, "How marvellous, congrats! Now say B." But the boy protested violently and banged his little fists on the desk as he said, "Now that's enough. I knew what would happen to me if I just said A. Then you'd want me to say B, and then I'd have to recite the whole alphabet, then learn to read and write. I know all along why I didn't want to say 'A.'"

**Reflection:** Are you also afraid of the consequent challenges of learning?

## LEARNING BEYOND INFORMATION

(A professor and a boatman were dialoguing while rowing across a river.)

**Professor:** Do you know how to read and write?

**Boatman:** No.

**Professor:** Then quarter of your life is wasted. Have you seen Cox's Bazar?

**Boatman:** No.

**Professor:** Then my man, half of your life is wasted. (Just then a storm broke out).

**Boatman:** Do you know how to swim?

**Professor:** No.

**Boatman:** Then your whole life is wasted.

The boat man swam to safety, while the professor drowned.

**Reflection:** In what way is your learning in school or college helping you and the people you love?

## STUDY GUIDELINES

**Have a workable timetable:** Some students complain that it is "useless" having a timetable for study because "it is too difficult to stick to it." But that is not reason enough to give it up altogether. These days students need kicks not on their "pants" but on their "can'ts." Consider why you could not stick to your timetable. Is it because of too much cricket or TV, multimedia addiction, or is it because you genuinely had too much to do?

**Learn to relax:** Avoid studying for too long, take a short break. Do something else that interests you. Walk around, talk with someone, you breathe in fresh air, play, do some physical exercise, have a fresh bath, listen to music but make sure your breaks don't turn into retirements.

## STUDY SKILLS

A suggested method for a systematic study is FIRST.

**F = Foreseeing** refers to the practice of get an overall view, know the titles, headlines, survey & then plan out before getting into the content of the subject matter.

**I = Inquiring** means 'interviewing'. Obtain information by asking questions. Ask questions to yourself and to other knowledgeable persons. Questions make you active, curious, critical and help you to concentrate.

**R = Reacting** is doing something to the subject matter you are studying. That means you participate, learn more, and become sensitive and alert. At this stage we read critically, we suspect and probe, agree and disagree. We learn to distinguish facts from assumptions and opinions.

**S = Speaking-out** is to ensure a higher level of comprehension, you express orally (or in writing) privately or to a group something about your understanding.

**T = Teleprinting** means distant printing. In order to remember what you study (both for exams and for life), imprint points by regular repetition and revision and this way, you avoid forgetting.

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