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Academics & Education QUIPS

■ Privacy please!

Do you need peace and quiet while doing homework? The writer Jack London did. When he needed privacy he had this sign posted outside his door:

- #1. Please do not enter without knocking.
- #2. Please do not knock.

■ The first Nerd on record

The first nerd on record is the one in Dr. Seuss's 1950 book, *If I Ran the Zoo*:

*And then, just to show them, I'll sail to
Ka-Troo
And bring back an It-Kutch, a Peep
and a Proo
A Nerkle, a Nerd, and a Seersucker,
too!*

■ A voracious reader

Author, Eric Hoffer mysteriously went blind when he was only seven years of age. He unexpectedly regained his sight at age fifteen. He was so afraid that blindness would return that he became obsessed with reading. He continued to read one book after another.

■ Finish, even if you finish last

Question: What do you call the student who finishes last in his/her graduation class at medical school? Answer: Doctor.

■ You better know your fractions

Pennsylvania farmers in the nineteenth century weren't going to be tricked when oil was discovered on their land and business tycoons offered them a percentage of the profits in exchange for drilling rights. Some farmers rejected the oil company's offer of $\frac{1}{2}$ the profits and held out for $\frac{1}{4}$ because 4 was larger than 2.

■ You're never too old to learn

After slavery was abolished in the 1860's many former slaves were hungry to learn to read. There was a 108-year-old lady who was determined to read the Bible before dying.



Academics & Education QUOTES

"In the case of good books, the point is not how many of them you get through, but rather how many can get through to you."

-Mortimer Adler

☞ **PRIMING THE PUMP:** Can you think of at least one book that really got to you, one you not only enjoyed but sparked your interest? What made that book so special to you? Have you ever been guilty of rushing through books that were required reading? How often do you read and approximately how many books do you read every month?

"Intelligence and character, that is the goal of true education."

-Martin Luther King, Jr.

☞ **PRIMING THE PUMP:** Can an intelligent person be truly successful in life without good character traits? Explain. Intelligence and character; which of these two do you think is most important and explain your answer? Many schools have Character Education programs. What are your thoughts about having such programs in school?

"I always keep myself in a position of being a student."

-Jackie Joyner-Kersey

☞ **PRIMING THE PUMP:** Once you graduate from school do you cease being a student? Explain your response. Think of two or three reasons why people should continue to learn, read, and study, no matter how old they get? Even though Olympian and track star, Jackie Joyner-Kersey was one of the greatest athletes ever; do you think she continued to learn new strategies for improving her speed and agility? What happens to people who stop learning?





Academics & Education

QUICK STARTERS

SUMMER VACATIONS ARE TOO LONG!

Have you ever heard of students who complained that summer vacations and holidays breaks were too long? Well, years ago, students wanted to spend as much time as they could at school; they were hungry to learn all they could! They were saddened when school closed for Christmas break and summer vacation.

Probably one of the most eager groups of children who wanted to learn was the freed slaves who had been deprived of an education. They flocked to school with a great desire to read and write. In her remarkable book, *Self-Taught*, Heather Andrea Williams goes into great detail on the unique strategies freed slaves implemented in order to learn. She tells how Booker T. Washington thought school was like paradise. He said, "I had no schooling whatever while I was a slave, though I remember on several occasions I went as far as the school door with one of my young mistresses to carry her books. The picture of several dozen boys and girls in a schoolroom engaged in study made a deep impression upon me, and I had a feeling that to get into a schoolhouse and study in this way would be about the same as getting into paradise."

Heather Andrea Williams shares these "nuggets" on how eager many of the freed slaves were on schooling:

- When Frederick Douglas was sent on errands by his master, he would carry a book and bread, trading the bread for help in reading the book.
- One slave traded boxing and wrestling lessons for writing lessons.
- As a young boy, Richard Parker picked up old nails and traded them for marbles that he used to pay white boys for reading lessons.
- Excited students would line up outside the school doors two or three hours before they opened. Here is what one South Carolina teacher said about the early arrivers. "Although classes were scheduled to begin at nine o'clock, children began to arrive at half past six in the morning, before teachers had even finished their breakfast."
- Many students refused to leave school at closing time.
- Students complained about vacations being too long. One teacher noted that at the start of Christmas vacation one student asked for a shorter vacation. Another teacher, on the last day of school, had several students, in tears, beg her not to close. One of Miss Doud's teary-eyed students said, "You ought not to stop school, for we are just beginning to learn."