

<u>Klausur 4. Kurshalbjahr</u>		
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	Thema: Teach Your Children Good, er, Well	Arbeitszeit: 210 min.

Teach Your Children Good, er, Well

Why education are so important

By Dave Barry

- 1 We have come to the time of year when we remove the video-game controls – by surgery, if necessary – from the hands of our children, and send them back to school. And if they complain that school is a boring waste of time, we smack them firmly yet lovingly with a roofing timber and remind them of the words of our first president, Benjamin
- 5 Franklin, who said: “ There is nothing more valuable in life than an education, except of course money, or a nice car.”

Those words are every bit as true as they were in 1935, when Porgy and Bess was first performed. Knowledge is our nation’s most precious resource, after agriculture and Ray Charles. Yet study after study shows that American children are not learning as well as

10 children from foreign countries such as Sweden and Hawaii. On standardized tests, most American 12th-graders are unable to correctly answer such basic academic questions as:

1. When you wear a baseball-style cap, which part is supposed to go in the front?
2. What is the difference between “hip-hop” and “music“?
3. Who is Dick Cheney?

15 (ANSWERS: 1. The front part. 2. Plenty. 3. None of your business.)

Why do our children perform so poorly on standardized tests? Does the fault lie with our teachers? With our school administrators? With our political leaders? Can we, as concerned parents, sue somebody about this and obtain millions of dollars?

Or maybe it's time that we parents stopped "passing the buck" on education. Maybe
20 instead of "pointing the finger" at everybody else, we should take a hard look at ourselves
in the mirror, and place the blame for our children's lousy test scores where it clearly
belongs: on our children. They have a terrible attitude. I have here a letter, which I am not
making up, from a teacher named Robin Walden of Kilgore, Texas, who states:

" I teach math to eighth-grade students. This is an unnecessary task because they are all
25 going to be professional basketball players, professional NASCAR race-drivers,
professional bass fisher people, or marine biologists who will never need to actually use
math."

This is a sad commentary on the unrealistic expectations of today's students. Because
the harsh statistical truth is that, in any given group of 10 young people, only a third of
30 them, or 22 percent, will actually succeed as professional bass fishers. The rest will wind
up in the "real world", where, like it or not, they will need a practical knowledge of
math.

For example, I recently found myself in a situation at a bank where suddenly, without
warning, I had to add up four three-digit numbers by hand. Fortunately, I went to
35 elementary school in the 1950s, when we were in the Cold War, and American children
were forced to learn addition, because the Russians were making THEIR children learn
addition. Thanks to that training, I knew that, to get the correct answer, I had to "carry"
some numbers. Unfortunately, I could not remember how to do this.

For some reason I could remember that " pi" is the ratio of circumference to diameter,
40 but that did not help me in this case. (To be honest, it has never helped me.) But
addition had leaked out of my brain, along with subtraction, multiplication, long
division, the "cosine", [...]

My point is that I finally gave up on adding my numbers and asked the bank teller, who
added them with a calculator, which uses tiny computer chips, which were invented
45 during the Cold War, which we won. [...]

And that is why we must stress to our children how important education is. We must tell them: Study hard! Learn as much as you can! Because we, your parents, are getting stupider by the day. We're experiencing massive Brain Leakage. Soon even the commercial jingles will be gone, and our heads will actually implode. Before that happens, we need to get out of the driver's seat, and turn the wheel over to you, the younger generation.

Don't ask us what we did with the keys.

www.Doe.virginia.gov./Div/winchester/jhhs/math/humor./teach.html

Annotation:

II.4/5: Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) – has never been President of the USA

Assignments

1. Analyse the headline and its function.
2. State the main topic and the author's attitude towards it. Give evidence.

Point out the reasons the author gives for a necessary change in the people's attitude towards education.
3. Show how the author uses the language in this text to stress its content.
4. Choose one of the topics.
 1. B. Franklin: "There is nothing more valuable in life than an education, except of course money, or a nice car." (II.5-6)

Comment on the statement.
 2. Write a letter to the editor stating your reaction to this article.
 3. "Maybe instead of 'pointing the finger' at everybody else, we should take a hard look at ourselves in the mirror, and place the blame for our children's lousy test scores where it clearly belongs: on our children." (II. 19-22)

Discuss.

Count your words, please. Good luck!