



Heritage Academy's

# INDEPENDENCE

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EDUCATION IN AMERICA: VOL. I

## **Our Mission**

*Thomas Jefferson stated, “If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be.” It is the goal of Independence and Heritage Academy as a whole to keep our nation from a state of ignorance. To accomplish this, Independence will promote learning through the essays of Heritage Academy scholars.*

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### **A Note from the Editors:**

You are reading something beautiful. Twenty years ago, Mr. Earl Taylor founded Heritage Academy to teach America's youth the principles upon which their country is founded. Now, Heritage has three campuses, and its message of founding principles has reached thousands of scholars. But we, those fortunates who are learning of the genius of the Founders, and of the exceptional nature of America, believe this message must reach farther. The ideas of self-government and independence should be sung from sea to shining sea. Only then can this, the last true bastion of freedom, be preserved.

So as you ponder these words, don't simply agree and move on, don't simply dismiss them as the ramblings of idiot teenagers. Learn, realize, apply, and live these principles, because you are reading something beautiful. Join Heritage Academy in saving America and building her heroes.

Thank you.

## Stop, Look, and Listen

Sarah West

Why must students be required to take multiple courses about American history? Surely the concepts can't be that hard to grasp? By the time a scholar graduates high school, they will have had taken numerous classes that discuss U.S. history. American students start learning about their country's story in elementary school, then they dive deeper into the past events in junior high, and finally in high school they receive a full in-depth course about the history of the United States. So what is so important that it must be drilled repeatedly into the minds of our youth? Maybe it would be simpler to ask, why do students need to take history courses at all? What's done is done and cannot be changed, so what's the point? Thomas Jefferson offers up a logical explanation to this question: "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be. If we are to guard against ignorance and remain free, it is the responsibility of every American to be informed" (Monticello.org). To start, let me define the word ignorance. It means "a lack of knowledge, understanding, or education" (Merriam-Webster.com). Therefore, this means, in order to remain free, we must be an educated people. Also note how Jefferson uses the word every. It's not the responsibility of a few individuals to achieve knowledge, but every single citizen's duty. If the vast majority of Americans are uneducated, they cannot make wise decisions when voting, nor can they keep their government in check. Therefore, the idea of a government run by the people will crumble. Now to answer the original question of why we must take countless American history courses: we must do so to learn from past successes as well as past mistakes. We must fight against ignorance by learning everything we can about what we, as a country, have attempted. We have to discover what has worked and what has not in order for us to make smart decisions on how to move forward. Also, if no studying is done, facts may be forgotten, such as the original definition of rights, or what freedom means. Learning as much as we can

about our nation's past is the only way we can progress and maintain our freedom.

Jefferson wasn't the only man to use the word ignorance. Ralph Waldo Emerson said in his famous speech *The American Scholar*, "Fear always springs from ignorance" (Emerson 135). People are no longer taking the time to learn about principles of running a good government, so when they run across troubles, they don't know what to do. Consequently, they look to their nation's leaders for help. They know that the government will know what to do, and they think they will be safe: their leaders are going to take care of them. This is how we lose freedom. We give up more and more of ourselves because we don't understand how to fix problems on our own, problems which are solvable by the people if we take the time to learn about the basic principles of freedom. However, these days the common thought process among the masses is to do only what is required and no more. Emerson also said, "The mind of this country, taught to aim at low objects, eats upon itself" (Emerson 136). People are taught to achieve low goals, to do only what is necessary. From the very start they are shown they will be taken care of, so they don't need to worry about learning how to take care of their freedom because someone will do it for them. In the same speech, he says that the best person is a man of many trades; one who works in other trades in addition to his profession, enabling him to know more and better appreciate others. However, society has distributed jobs to people, and once they receive their assignments, they do not look outside of their specialty. They stay in a rut, consistently doing the same job over and over, resulting in extensive knowledge over one small topic. In this way the people feel accomplished without having done much and the government gets to acquire more and more control over its ill-informed people.

Some people realize the problems of not knowing enough, so they study; they try to become more learned. Their intentions are very pure: they strive to become more knowledgeable so they can be

productive members of society. However, sometimes information gets skewed. For example, the word “right”. Our founders said that an unalienable right is something “endowed [to men] by their Creator,” and among those rights are “Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness” (Jefferson 30). But according to Franklin D. Roosevelt, the rights of Americans were those of “security and prosperity” (Roosevelt 97). These included, “The right to a useful and remunerative job in the industries or shops or farms or mines of the Nation; The right to earn enough to provide adequate food and clothing and recreation; The right of every family to a decent home” and more (97). If the word “right” has been skewed, what else could be? Granted, this problem could be easily fixed by the people if they were to go and look back at original documents written by the fathers of our country. They choose not to though, as they assume that everything the government says is true, so they have no need to research topics themselves. They are becoming overly dependent, and if the government were to fall, they would struggle greatly with learning how to take care of themselves again.

So now that the importance of education is understood, what next? What is to be done with all

of this knowledge? For starters, people can teach others, or even just encourage them to learn about American history. This is the lowest level of political involvement, but also the one that has the highest impact. When knowledge is shared, public awareness increases. Not everyone has to be the person to run for office, but maybe someone they talked to is fit for the job. By spreading information, people can be helping others, more specifically other voters, figure out how to make the best choices on what to support. All of this starts with you. You have to take care of yourself before you can help others, so you should start with understanding the basic principles of freedom and government yourself. But above all else, the one idea that must be kept in your head is to stop, look, and listen. If a bill sounds a little off, or too good to be true, “‘Stop, look, and listen’ to the fundamental principles upon which this Government of ours was organized” (Smith 85). If the bill that is attempting to be passed doesn’t fit within the powers of the branch or level of government passing it, tell people. Spread the news, make everyone see its flaw. Your words can change America. Your knowledge can change America. You can save our freedom.

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## Education Begins At Home

### Sarah Taylor

What is the purpose of education? One definition says that education is “the act or process of imparting or acquiring general knowledge, developing the powers of reasoning and judgment, and generally preparing oneself or others intellectually for mature life” (“Education”). In America, many are trying to make reforms to the education system by moving regulations from the community to the federal level. In addition, new budget plans and methods of standardized testing have been suggested and put into use across the nation. Our education system, however, will not be repaired by simple structural changes. Alexis de Tocqueville, in *Democracy in America*, observed, “Society is endangered, not by the great profligacy of a few, but by laxity of morals amongst all” (241). By this statement he means that the people as a whole, not just a few careless

or wasteful people, will drag society into a downward spiral. The deterioration of American education is a result of the deterioration of the people, and more specifically, the deterioration of the family. Because the traditional family is becoming more uncommon, school systems are suffering. The American education system will flourish only if a school education is supported by a home education where families teach their children virtue, become involved in schooling, and create an environment that promotes learning and growth.

In order for people to contribute positively to society, they must first be virtuous. Without morals amongst all, even the “educated” will be unable to work with their peers in a way that generates progress. Moral growth is an essential part of the education of youth. Benjamin Franklin said that “general virtue is more

probable to be expected and obtained from the education of youth than from the exhortation of adult persons; bad habits and vices of the mind being... more easily prevented than cured” (qtd. in Allison 352). For reformation of education to occur, we must focus on the moral foundation of youth in this nation. The schools of America, however, cannot and should not be solely relied upon to teach youth moral strength. Harvard lecturer Rick Weissbourd reports, “Much of what passes for character education in schools simply has no influence on adults’ emotional or moral qualities.” A solution is found, nonetheless, in Weissbourd’s conclusion that “qualities and beliefs emerge and continually evolve in the wide array of relationships that every child has with both adults and peers starting nearly at birth.” Since a child begins to develop moral character at such a young age, certainly his family is primarily responsible for this development. A child is sent to preschool or kindergarten only after several years of interaction with the family. Through years of school, the time spent at home continues to have a tremendous impact on a child’s character development. Children “need a place where they can begin to develop a moral sense. They need people to guide them toward what is right and good. Home is that place. Families are those people” (Bennett vii). Some students do not spend such amounts of time with their families; some students are not strengthened whatsoever by their families. Because these situations are becoming more common in America, more students are losing fundamental values, making them less valuable to their peers. In families, children and youth can become students often without realizing it: this education develops a strong moral compass that will guide them in all aspects of life.

In addition to moral guidance, parents can improve the education of their children by assisting teachers in secular education. Students who arrive at school with basic academic knowledge will be well prepared for higher teaching. Psychologists Hart and Risley encourage both speaking and reading to children “early and often” (Shenk 39). Studies have shown that these examples of parental involvement expose children to a wider variety of vocabulary and scholastic knowledge (Shenk 38, Hinckley 61). While it is true that “the education of our children starts at home,” as stated by educators from Anvoy Academy, “we all know that school plays a crucial role” (Moral). Schools are essential in education, and families can and should be vital participants of this scholastic training. Dr. Earl Taylor, president of the National Center for Constitutional Studies, is also a high school principal

and teacher. In his lectures, he teaches that the Founders gave no power to the federal government in the Constitution to regulate education. In K-12 schools, he says, “the people who should have the most say about the education of children are parents.” As a teacher and parent, Dr. Taylor has seen the value of parent involvement with schooling. Before sending children to school, and also while children are in school, parents have the opportunity and responsibility to ensure that their children receive the best education and learn from the best sources of knowledge.

Regardless of their level of education, family members can instill in youth the desire to learn and grow intellectually. Parents who are supportive will help a child understand the value of formal education. Generally, the students who have stronger families are more likely to succeed in school (Rouse). Dr. Taylor concurs: “The real difference is in how a student is able to deal with problems. You may have a good student, a real smart student, but if they don’t have a real strong home life... they’re not as settled.” In strong family units, youth are able to focus on school without worrying about problems at home. These families can create a learning environment by making school and study priorities. Because home is the place adolescents first learn the value of work, and more work is required of the rising generation, it is increasingly important that families teach their young students. Harvard psychologist Howard Gardner suggests that “parents and peers will turn out to have complementary roles: parents are more important when it comes to education [and] discipline,” while “peers are more important for learning cooperation... [and] interaction among people of the same age” (qtd. in Shenk 109). Yes, professionals play an important role in education, but the family is primarily responsible for the development of a child. Dr. Taylor states, “No other success can compensate for failure in the home,” quoting high school teacher and principal David McKay, and continues, “to me, there is no group of people that know the truth of that better than teachers.” By encouragement and example, parents teach students to work hard and value learning.

Education can be reformed as families reform. An informal home education and a formal school education work hand-in-hand to prepare students intellectually to solve problems and succeed in future occupations. While the influence from a school is meaningful to a young scholar, teachers can never replace parents. Certainly, the problems American students face today come most often from “the homes of the people. If there is to be a reformation, if there is to be



a change, if there is to be a return to old and sacred values, it must begin in the home” (Hinckley 143). Until families become stronger, the quality of education in America will not reach its full potential. Until more children of the rising generation develop a strong moral compass, society will not improve. Until parents become involved in the education of their children, schools will

remain stagnant, left to the whims of the distant federal government. In speaking of education, Thomas Jefferson reminds citizens of the United States, “The boys of the rising generation are to be the men of the next” (qtd. in Allison 409). By building strong families, we build strong students and a strong society.

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## Knowledge is Freedom

Mikaela Joerz

Ronald Reagan, the man who renewed the sense of pride in the citizens of America, once said, “An informed patriotism is what we want” (Reagan). America came to be the great nation it is today because of the wisdom of its Founding Fathers, and they only came to such great understanding of the world around them by being well-rounded, educated people. Thomas Jefferson could not have written a testimony of freedom as profound as the Declaration of Independence without having a deep understanding of the principles of liberty from studying history and philosophy. James Madison could not have contributed so much to the writing of the constitution if he had not meticulously examined the high and low points of other governments from history. Our Founding Fathers were great men not only because of their character, but because they were learned men. Knowledge is what made the American people free, and it is the only thing that can keep the American people free.

Before the Civil War, it was illegal for the black slaves of the south to be educated. Their masters knew that once the slaves realized their imprisonment, they would rebel. The masters used the slave’s ignorance to keep them down. Frederick Douglass, a former slave, a great abolitionist and an outspoken advocate of freedom, relates in his autobiography that he only learned the true horror

of slavery when he learned to read and write. By learning to read, he found that knowledge was “the pathway from slavery to freedom” (Douglas). He found that “the more [he] read, the more [he] was lead to abhor and detest [his] enslavers” (Douglas). It was only once he became educated and learned of the evil of his situation that he took measures to free himself.

Communism, though while not technically slavery, is one of the most oppressive forms of government in the world. One of the ways the communist leaders gain control of the people is by controlling news, media and the education system. One of the communist goals, according to Cleon Skousen as written in his book *The Naked Communist*, is as follows: “Get control of the schools. [and] Use them as transmission belts for socialism and current Communism propaganda... [and] Put the party line in textbooks” (Skousen 119). By regulating the schools, the communists can control how the people think, and therefore how they act. The people cannot rebel if they have no idea they are being oppressed. There is no freedom without education.

Ralph Waldo Emerson stated that the “true scholar [is] the only master” (Emerson, 130). The only way we can master our lives and ensure our freedom is to become educated. First, we must become educated in the basics, such as reading, writing,

science, mathematics and history. History, along with and other studies of on human interaction, is especially important. “The world is always influenced by all the experience and all the thought of the past” (Coolidge 69), and we must take it upon ourselves to learn from the experience of those who came before us. By studying past events and how people reacted to deal with them, we learn truths and principles that work in modern-day problems. Knowing these fundamental doctrines is useless unless we can apply them to real-life situations. In order to do this, we must remain knowledgeable about today’s world by keeping up with both national and international news. By being informed on current events, we can understand today’s issues the issues in play today and how to respond accordingly. What is the point of voting if we don’t understand what we’re voting on? Only informed citizens know what it’s the best course of action to take for their country.

After we have educated ourselves, we have a duty to educate others. By ensuring the next generation is educated, we ensure the continued prosperity of America. One of the most efficient ways of teaching is through the public school system. Francis Bellamy, author of Pledge of Allegiance, asked, “Isn’t the public school the most representative and truly American institution we

have?” (Bellamy 24). The ability to attend a public school is very engrained in America; one of the first steps towards racial equality was to create integrated schools. We can also educate each other using our freedom of speech and press. The media, if used correctly, can be very valuable about informing others of what’s going on in other parts of the world. But while public schools and the news are important to creating a well-educated citizen, learning lessons from the home is what really makes a good person. Ronald Reagan said, “All great change in America begins at the dinner table” (Reagan). It’s ultimately up to the family to provide for people. It’s in the home that children develop a love of learning and a love of their country.

“A democracy can be no better than the people in it...We can do without automobiles, radios, and washing machines if we must. We got along well without them before. But we can’t do without educated, tolerant citizens” (Weisenbuffer 100). America is only as good as it’s leaders, and it’s leaders are only as good as the people that vote them into office. It’s the responsibility of the people to know what’s right for their country by learning from the mistakes of the past and sharing that wisdom with others. Only through an informed public can we keep America free.



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SCIENCE OF GOVERNMENT”



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