



Unit 1

Learning

Learning Objectives

After studying this unit, you'll be able to

- find out what reading style you should choose when you read a book or other reading materials with certain specific purposes;
- have a better understanding of the importance of learning;
- gradually form the habits of positive self talk.

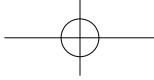
Starter

What kinds of difficulties do you have in study?

Do you have any shortcuts to raise your efficiency in the learning process?

Read the following proverbs concerning learning, and share your opinions on them with your partner.

- Strike the iron while it is hot.
- Where there is a will, there is a way.
- A bad workman always blames his tools.
- Fools learn nothing from wise men, but wise men learn much from fools.
- If you want knowledge, you must toil for it.



Passage A



INTRODUCTION

At age 89, Mary Fasano graduated with a bachelor's degree from the Harvard Extension School and entered the history books as the oldest person to earn an undergraduate degree at Harvard. The following is the speech she delivered—"The Power of Knowledge"—at the Extension School diploma awarding ceremony.



TEXT

The Power of Knowledge

I remember one night a few years ago when my daughter was frantic¹ with worry. After my Harvard Extension School classes, I usually arrived at the bus station near my home by 11:00 pm, but on that night I was nowhere to be found. My daughter was nervous. It wasn't safe for a single woman to walk alone on the streets at night, especially one as defenseless² as I am: I might be able to slay³ a mugger⁴ with my sharp wit, but I'm just too short to do any real physical damage.

That night my daughter checked the bus station, drove around the streets, and contacted some friends. But she couldn't find me until she called my astronomy⁵ professor who told her that I was on top of the Science Center using the telescope⁶ to gaze at the stars. Unaware of the time, I had gotten lost in the heavens and was only thinking about the new things I had learned that night in class.

This story illustrates a habit I have developed over the years: I lose track of the time when it comes to learning. How else do you explain a woman who began high school at age 71 and who is graduating with a bachelor's degree at 89? I may have started late, but I will continue to learn as long as I am able to because there is no greater feeling, in my opinion, than traveling to a faraway country and being able to identify by sight the painting of a famous artist, the statue of an obscure⁷ sculptor⁸, and the cathedral⁹ of an ancient architect¹⁰. I have found that the world is a final exam that you can

1. frantic: *adj.* 发狂的
2. defenseless: *adj.* 不能自卫的
3. slay: *v.* 杀害
4. mugger: *n.* 抢劫犯
5. astronomy: *n.* 天文学
6. telescope: *n.* 望远镜
7. obscure: *adj.* 默默无闻的
8. sculptor: *n.* 雕塑家
9. cathedral: *n.* 大教堂
10. architect: *n.* 建筑师



never be prepared enough for. So I will continue to take classes and tell my story.

Lately it seems that everyone is asking me, “Mary, what advice do you have for other students?” So while I have you all here, I’m going to ease my burden of answering each of you individually.

If the saying is true that wisdom comes with age, you may safely assume that I am one of the wisest people in this hall and possibly at this university today. So listen to me when I tell you this: Knowledge is power.

My studies were interrupted when I was in the 7th grade, back sometime around World War I. I loved school but I was forced to leave it to care for my family. I was consigned to work in a cotton mill¹¹, where I labored for many years. I eventually married and raised 5 children, 20 grandchildren, and 18 great-grandchildren. But all the while I felt inferior¹² to those around me. I knew I was as smart as a college graduate. I knew I was capable of doing a job well—I had proved it by running a successful family business for decades that still exists. But I wanted more. I wanted to feel confident when I spoke and I wanted people to respect my opinions.

Does it surprise you to discover how much you have in common with an 89-year-old woman? I know that many of you graduates today, whether you were born in 1907 or 1967, have faced similar barriers¹³ to completing your studies and have sometimes felt inferior around those you work or socialize with just because you didn’t have a degree.

But I am here today—like you are—to prove that it can be done; that the power gained by understanding and appreciating the world around us can be obtained by anyone regardless of social status, personal challenges or age. That belief is what has motivated¹⁴ me for the last 75 years to get this degree. It is also the mission of the Harvard Extension School. Without the support I received from this school, I might not have graduated



11. mill: *n.* 工厂

12. inferior: *adj.* 自卑的；较差的

13. barrier: *n.* 阻碍；障碍物

14. motivate: *v.* 激发……积极性



until I was 100—a phrase that many of you have probably used in jest¹⁵.

There are many students here who do not have the opportunity that I do to speak their minds and have everybody listen, whether they want to or not. But be assured, fellow graduates, that we are more similar than you might think. If you have treated education as your main goal, not as a means to an end, then you, too, have probably been claimed as a missing person once in your academic career, whether you were lost in the stars or the stacks¹⁶ of Widener Library.

And you, too, know that the journey was worth it, and that the power of knowledge makes me the most formidable¹⁷ 89-year-old woman at the bus stop.

(775 words)

15. jest: *n.* 笑话; 俏皮话

16. stack: *n.* (图书馆的) 藏书书架

17. formidable: *adj.* 难以对付的

NOTE

Widener Library: 哈佛大学学校本部最大的图书馆, 馆舍宏伟壮观, 拥有十层藏书库。



EXERCISES

- Do the following statements agree with the information given in the text? Mark T for TRUE if the statement is true, or F for FALSE if the statement is false, or NG for NOT GIVEN if the information is not given in the passage.
 - Mary Fasano is the oldest person to earn an undergraduate degree at Harvard in history.
 - When Mary walks alone on the streets at night, she can slay a mugger for she is strong.
 - When her daughter found her late at night, Mary Fasano was on top of the Science Center, doing experiments.
 - Mary Fasano says she will continue to learn as long as she is able to because the world is a final exam that one can never be prepared enough for.
 - Mary Fasano is assumed to be the wisest people in this hall because wisdom comes with age.
 - Mary Fasano was the best student in her class when she was in Grade 7, but she was forced to leave school to care for her family.
 - It's suggested by Mary Fasano that anyone can gain power by understanding and appreciating the world regardless of social status, personal challenges or age.
 - Education should be the goal of our life, instead of a means to an end.



2. Give a short answer to each of the following questions.

- 1) Where was Mary Fasano that night when her daughter could not find her anywhere?
- 2) How old was Mary Fasano when she began her high school study?
- 3) Why was Mary Fasano forced to leave school when she was young?
- 4) Why does Mary Fasano often feel inferior to those around her?
- 5) According to Mary Fasano, what is the significance of education?

3. Discuss the following questions.

- 1) Mary Fasano feels inferior to those around her because she does not have a degree. Do you think a degree is so important in one's life? Share your opinions with your partner.
- 2) In your opinion, what is the purpose of education in the modern society?
- 3) After you graduate from college, will you plan to continue your study? Why?

Passage B



INTRODUCTION

If you have been guilty of some bad study habits, it's not too late to learn some other habits that will work better for you.



TEXT

How to Improve Your Study Habits

As a student you have probably experienced many moments when it was hard to make yourself settle down and study, even when an important exam was coming up.

If you're like most students, you put off studying until the very last minute. The night before the exam, you'll stay up all night cramming, getting little or no sleep. In the morning, you'll drag yourself out of bed, psych yourself up with lots of coffee, and go into the exam feeling exhausted, drained¹ and jittery² at the same time. You'll find it hard to focus or think,

1. drained: *adj.* 精疲力竭的
2. jittery: *adj.* 紧张不安的



and you'll be cursing yourself for not starting to study sooner.

And not surprisingly, unless you're blessed with natural brilliance³, or you happen to know the subject matter extremely well, you'll probably do terribly on the test.

A big problem for most people, especially young students, is that life gets in the way. You probably have a part-time job, and like most youngsters, you also want to have a social life.

Studying can seem very boring compared to all the exciting temptations⁴ just outside your door or the games on your computer. Even watching reruns⁵ of an old film can seem more interesting than the biology⁶ textbook your teacher is expecting you to master.



One reason we often don't start studying until the last possible minute is that we have misjudged⁷ how long it will actually take us to absorb and understand the material. If your mid-term is still six weeks away, that might

seem like plenty of time left before you need to get around to⁸ studying. You might find, however, that the subject matter is a lot harder to understand than you thought it would be, and all of a sudden there's no time left to ask someone to explain it to you.

If you have been guilty of all these bad study habits, it's not too late to learn some other habits that will work better for you.

First, remind yourself why you want to do better in your studies. Maybe you need a good mark to get into a good college. Maybe you want a chance at a career that will pay you well. Always keep your end goal in mind.

You can put little cards up around your room with inspirational⁹ messages and attractive photographs that will remind you why you want to do well in school.

If you feel very overwhelmed, you can improve your motivation¹⁰ and your performance by breaking up the project into smaller sections, or "chunks." Each time you accomplish¹¹ one little bit successfully, give yourself a meaningful reward.

3. brilliance: *n.* 才华

4. temptation: *n.* 诱惑

5. rerun: *n.* 重新放映

6. biology: *n.* 生物学

7. misjudge: *v.* 错误地判断或估计

8. get around to: 开始考虑做; 抽出时间做

9. inspirational: *adj.* 鼓舞人心的

10. motivation: *n.* 积极性

11. accomplish: *v.* 完成(任务)



If you have a deadline looming¹², decide how much of the project you need to tackle¹³ at one time.

Let's say you have 20 days to master the content of a difficult biology textbook. Looking through the book you may realize that if you study one chapter each night, you can get through the book in 10 days, leaving 10 days in which you can review the material again.

By doing so, you know what your assignment is. You know how much you need to read every night. Concentrate¹⁴ on the task at hand. You don't need to feel overwhelmed by the entire book.

Next, work out a system of rewards for yourself. Give yourself a series of small rewards each time you master one chapter, and a larger reward for completing the entire book.

For rewards to work, they must be immediate and personally meaningful to you. There is no point in rewarding yourself with a new fishing rod¹⁵ if you hate fishing.

Rewards don't need to be material objects if there is something else that would really inspire you. How about attending a special concert or taking a special trip? You decide. Get creative and think of something that will spur¹⁶ you to take action.

It's very important that the reward should be paid soon after the work has been accomplished. This creates a sense of positive reinforcement¹⁷. Give yourself a small reward every time you finish a small part of the job, and a bigger reward when the project is completed.

Besides motivating yourself with a series of external¹⁸ rewards, learn to motivate yourself internally. Tell yourself you're a good learner. Tell yourself you enjoy learning. Tell yourself you enjoy giving your brain a good workout. Congratulate yourself for your efforts. Tell yourself you love acquiring new knowledge, and let yourself feel joy in learning.

Moreover, for information to sink into your brain you need to review it several times, and your brain needs to sleep properly. You need to relieve your mental stress. Your brain needs good nutrition¹⁹ and it needs to be in a peaceful and confident state. Drugs and alcohol don't help the process of learning.

If you start to cram the night before the exam, you are putting your brain at a big disadvantage.

By cutting back on your sleep, you're not giving your brain a chance to put

12. loom: v. 逼近
13. tackle: v. 处理; 解决

14. concentrate: v. 集中 (精力)

15. rod: n. 竿

16. spur: v. 激励

17. reinforcement: n. 增强; 加强

18. external: adj. 外部的

19. nutrition: n. 营养



the information you've been studying into the hard drive storage of your brain.

By starting your studies early, and reviewing what you've learned, you have a much better chance of remembering and understanding what you need to know when you encounter²⁰ a big exam.

(880 words)

20. encounter: v. 遭遇



EXERCISES

1. Do the following statements agree with the information given in the text? Mark T for TRUE if the statement is true, or F for FALSE if the statement is false, or NG for NOT GIVEN if the information is not given in the text.

- 1) Many students find it hard to make themselves settle down and study, even when an important exam is around the corner.
- 2) If you're lucky enough to have a high IQ, or you know the subject matter well, you may get a high score in the exam.
- 3) To handle an overwhelming task, you should break it up into smaller sections and accomplish each at a time.
- 4) If you forget to reward yourself, it does not matter.
- 5) Staying up late at night to study is not a bad way to prepare for the exam.
- 7) The author suggests that frequent reviewing is an important step in the learning process.

2. Find a word in the text for each definition below.

- 1) to judge wrongly: _____.
- 2) the state of being motivated; need or purpose: _____.
- 3) to take action in order to deal with: _____.
- 4) to urge or encourage to work harder: _____.
- 5) the process of giving or getting food: _____.
- 6) to meet or have to deal with: _____.

3. Discuss the following questions.

- 1) Do you have any bad study habits? Please make a list of them and discuss with your partner about the possible improvements.
- 2) Sometimes reward can be a big motivation, but one should not study simply for rewards. Do you agree with the author's suggestion of self-rewarding? Why?



Reading Skills

Identifying Skill Requirements

One of the most obvious, but often unnoticed, facts about reading is that there are different types of reading skills.

- Skimming—reading rapidly for the main idea.
- Scanning—reading rapidly to find a specific piece of information.
- Extensive reading—reading a long text, often for pleasure with emphasis on its overall meaning.
- Intensive reading—reading a short text for detailed information.

These different types of skills are used quite naturally when we read in the mother tongue. Unfortunately, when learning a second or foreign language, people tend to employ only “intensive” reading skills. Students insist on understanding every word and find it difficult to take the advice of reading for the general idea, or only looking for the required information. Students studying a foreign language often feel that if they don’t understand every word they are somehow not completing the exercise. But that’s obviously wrong, since you cannot make big improvements without a proper reading style. So, the best thing for you to do before you start reading is to identify the reading style required in a specific reading situation.



EXERCISES

Identify the reading skills required in the following reading situations.

Note: There is often not a single correct answer. Several choices may be possible according to your reading purposes. If you find that there are different possibilities, state the situations in which you would use the various skills.

- The TV guide for Friday evening
- An English grammar book
- An article in *National Geographic* magazine about the Roman Empire
- A good friend’s homepage on the Internet
- The weather report in the local newspaper
- A novel
- A poem
- A bus timetable
- A fax in the office



- An email or a letter from your best friend
- A recipe
- A short story written by your favorite author

Supplementary Reading

Seven Steps to Positive Self Talk

Most of us are in a state of constant mental chatter. We talk to ourselves all day long and, unfortunately, this self talk is frequently negative. This negativity can destroy any seed of hope that we may otherwise have in striving for our dreams.

Our actions are inspired by our thoughts. If we can change the way we think, we can begin
5 to change the actions we take. It is human nature to seek personal growth, whether financially, emotionally, physically or spiritually. Practicing positive self talk can help us set in motion actions that will bring us greater rewards.

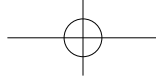
The following are seven steps to positive self talk. By following these steps you will begin to get rid of negative inner conversations and have more empowering thoughts.

10 1. Eliminate internal negative chatter

The first step is one of awareness. It will be hard to make a change to positive thinking without being acutely intimate with the thoughts that run through your mind. Recently, I was amazed to discover deeply buried emotions from negative thoughts that I had for fewer than 10 minutes. Without awareness, I would have kept carrying the hurt and anger inside. Awareness helped me to
15 bring them out to deal with them.

Undoubtedly it will not be easy to make a switch if you have a long history of negative self talk. Your talk became negative over the years due to various factors. For instance, if your first grade teacher repeatedly told you that you were “stupid,” you might begin to believe it to be truly the case. You would find that your inner chatter would often be filled with talk of “I am so slow” or
20 “it is so hard to learn.” If you constantly tell yourself such negative stories, your actions are going to reflect your low self-esteem.

Common negative talk involves telling yourself “I can’t.” When you say to yourself “I can’t” or “It is too difficult,” you are creating resistance. Having such a mental block will prevent you from achieving tasks you could otherwise succeed at.



25 Anytime you catch yourself saying “I can’t,” turn around and challenge your own claim with “Why can’t I?” If you would like to be successful, you need to start saying “I can” a lot more.

30 A great method that I have also found useful, each time I find myself saying something negative, is to say “cancel, cancel,” whether in the mind or verbally. The method works if you sincerely have the intent of becoming a positive
35 thinker.



2. Voice positive affirmations

Affirmations are positive statements of a desired outcome or goal. They are usually short, believable and focused. By repeating them over and over again, you open up the possibility of a new state of thoughts.

40 An important step when repeating affirmations is that you need to read your affirmations aloud with feeling. The mere reading of the words bears no consequence unless you put strong emotion in them. Your subconscious mind can take any order given in complete faith. So the daily practice of repeating affirmations is important.

3. Creat positive scripts

45 One thing that you may observe is it is easy for your mind to build negative thought upon negative thought. The chatter not only does not stop, but it spins a drama that traps and limits you.

From now on, regularly do this exercise instead. Spin an uplifting story that runs like a movie. Some visualization will be helpful. The longer you can tell this story to yourself the better. It is also better if you can make it a story about having all your goals achieved. When you do this, you start
50 to internalize your goals and dreams, as if they are something that you have already achieved.

4. Replace negative influences with positive ones

It is important that you identify external negative factors in your life which may be holding your thoughts hostage. For instance, your mental state can become toxic by being around friends who are negative. If you are not vigilant enough, you will start to adopt their thoughts as your own.

55 Hence, be alert to what your negative influences are. If they come from certain friends, limit your exposure to them as much as you can. Refrain from discussing your plans with people who will be unsupportive of your dreams and goals. Instead, surround yourself with thoughts and actions from people who will empower you.



5. Give present tense messages

60 You may find yourself daunted by the many things you need to do in order to reach your goals. It just seems overwhelming to achieve the success that you secretly desire for. Your mind gets caught up in an endless stream of worry.

What may be helpful is to concentrate on steps you can take at present. If you find yourself getting stuck, stop and say, “What can I do right now?” Change your internal talk from that of
65 future anxiety to a manageable present. You cannot control what will happen in the future, but you can take the necessary steps at present. Taking the necessary steps requires you to focus your thoughts and inner talk on Now.

6. Confront fears

Fear is often what holds you back from your success. You may be scared of taking chances
70 because you fear losing the security that you enjoy now. You try to convince yourself that you are happy in your current state, but in fact you are not. Your self talk may sound positive in your attempt to lie to yourself.

Ask yourself what you are afraid of. Take a step-by-step approach in breaking down your fears and see if there is any way round to looking at things more positively. When you confront your
75 fears, you should often remind yourself that the worst result is not as bad as you think. In fact, the benefits of change are worth the risk. Your inner talk begins to change at this point.

7. Focus on enjoyable moments

It is much easier to maintain a positive attitude if you focus on the enjoyable moments in life rather than the difficult ones. While there will inevitably be challenges, you need to remember that
80 life consists of ups and downs, and good times are often forged through the bad.

So choose to fill your mind with positive images and thoughts. Make this a conscious habit. Simply bring your mind back every time it goes astray. If you can be grateful for what you have, your self talk will also be more in alignment with joy.

By following the above tips to positive self talk, you will experience an improvement in the
85 quality of your life. The rewards are plentiful, with greater happiness, peace and joy. Best of all, you can feel more empowered. With the change in energy, you are more likely to reach your highest potential and achieve success.

(1,152 words)



BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE



For young students, personal development can be confusing. One moment we're told to think big, set goals and take action towards creating the future we desire. The next moment, we are told to live in the now and be thankful for what we have.

Many people come to the belief that a key to being both happy and successful is a balanced attitude. This is an attitude where, for example, satisfaction and dissatisfaction co-exist. One should learn how to keep an internal balance and form a positive thinking habit.



