

The Life of Francis Bacon

Francis Bacon is considered a Renaissance man. He worked as a lawyer and scientist throughout his life (1561-1626.)

Bacon's most valuable work surrounded philosophical and Aristotelian concepts that supported the scientific method. Bacon served as an attorney general as well as lord chancellor of England and received his education from several universities including Trinity College and the University of Cambridge.

Francis Bacon is popularly known as an eminent essayist, thinker, scholar, and philosopher. He belongs to the Elizabethan age. So far as Francis Bacon is concerned, he was one of the greatest men of Literature and is popularly known as the **Father of English Essays**. Being the essayist of the Elizabethan age, he wrote a galaxy of essays on different issues. Bacon wrote over 50 essays beginning with "Of" in the title and following the concept His world-famous essay is – **Of Studies, Of Love, Of Friendship, Of Hatred, Of Death, Of Truth, Of Philosophy, Of Beauty, Of Ambition, and Of Custom and Education.**

- Bacon is known as the father of the scientific method which was influenced by his own Baconian method based on reason and observation.
- There are rumors that Bacon was mostly attracted to men, due to his late marriage in life, among other theories.

Of Studies by Francis Bacon (1625) [500 words]

Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight is in privateness and retiring; for ornament, is in discourse; and for ability, is in the judgment and disposition of business. For expert men can execute, and perhaps judge of particulars, one by one; but the general counsels, and the plots and marshalling of affairs, come best from those that are learned. To spend too much time in studies is sloth; to use them too much for ornament, is affectation; to make judgment wholly by their rules, is the humor of a scholar. They perfect nature, and are perfected by experience: for natural abilities are like natural plants, that need pruning, by study; and studies themselves do give forth directions too much at large, except they be bounded in by experience. Crafty men condemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them; for they teach not their own use; but that is a wisdom without them, and above them, won by observation.

Read not to contradict and confute; nor to believe and take for granted; nor to find talk and discourse; but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. Some books also may be read by deputy, and extracts made of them by others; but that would be only in the less important arguments, and the meaner sort of

books, else distilled books are like common distilled waters, flashy things. Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man. And therefore, if a man write little, he had need have a great memory; if he confer little, he had need have a present wit: and if he read little, he had need have much cunning, to seem to know that he doth not. Histories make men wise; poets witty; the mathematics subtle; natural philosophy deep; moral grave; logic and rhetoric able to contend. Abeunt studia in mores [Studies

pass into and influence manners]. Nay, there is no stound or impediment in the wit but may be wrought out by fit studies; like as diseases of the body may have appropriate exercises. Bowling is good for the stone and reins; shooting for the lungs and breast; gentle walking for the stomach; riding for the head; and the like. So if a man's wit be wandering, let him study the mathematics; for in demonstrations, if his wit be called away never so little, he must begin again. If his wit be not apt to distinguish or find differences, let him study the

Schoolmen; for they are cymini sectores [splitters of hairs]. If he be not apt to beat over matters, and to call up one thing to prove and illustrate another, let him study the lawyers' cases. So every defect of the mind may have a special receipt.

SUMMARY

Highlighting the importance of studies, Bacon's essay illustrates the role studies play in an individual's daily life. For Bacon, the study is always related to the application of knowledge in practical life. At the beginning of his essay, Bacon describes the **three main purposes** of study including

(i) studying for gaining delight, (ii) studies done for ornamenting one's life and (iii) studying in order to improve one's ability.

The author is the notion that only learned and well-read men can execute plans effectively, manage their daily affairs with expertise and lead a healthy and stable life. He further states that reading makes a full man; conference leads to a ready man while writing makes an exact man.

While throwing light on the advantages and usefulness of studies, Bacon also puts forward some **demerits of study** as he thinks that (i) studying for a prolonged period of time may lead to laziness. (ii) He also condemns the act of studying from books solely without learning from nature around.

The essay *Of Studies* further asserts the **benefits of studies** by considering this act (i) as a medicine for the defects of the human mind and the source of enhancing one's wit. (ii) While discussing the importance of studying in an individual's life, the essayist informs his readers about the **benefits of reading good books**. For Bacon, some books are only meant to be tasted; others are there to swallow while some books are meant for chewing and digesting properly. Therefore, the readers must choose wisely before studying any book to enhance his/her knowledge about the world around.

Bacon concludes his essay by suggesting that studies assist an individual in removing the defects of his/her mind as every problem of the human mind carries special importance for the individual and the world.

Conclusion

Bacon's essay *Of Studies* deals with the benefits of studies for the individuals in their daily lives. From reading books to writing papers, study plays a vital role in a man's life making him learned, witty and experienced.

The essay by Bacon is enriched with intellectual wisdom, pragmatic approach and practical knowledge; therefore, it is considered to be the most beneficial essay for the students and young individuals.

Although the essay is devoid of any emotions and colourful expressions, it is; nevertheless, a wonderful effort of teaching the readers about the importance of studying.

Analysis of "Of Studies"

The writer begins this essay by enlisting three purposes of studies which are as follows:

1. **Studies for delight:** Studies for gaining delight or happiness in one's life.
2. **Studies for ability:** Studies for improving one's ability in life.
3. **Studies for Ornament:** Studies for ornamenting one's life.

The first use of studies is that they serve for delight or pleasure. This delight can be found in solitude or leisure after retirement from active life. Secondly, studies serve as an ornament in communication, conversation, and discourse. An educated person talks more attractively than an illiterate person. The third help in decision-making or judgment and disposition of business.

However, the studies have their own limitation. If too much time, is spent on studies, it is nothing but laziness. If these are used excessively in conversation, they tend to exaggerate and pose a person and if a scholar makes every decision of his life with his knowledge then it is foolish and humorous behavior of the scholar.

According to Bacon **“Crafty men condemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them.”**

Men who are hardworking or primitive men hate or condemn studies. However, men with simple intellect admire them. Moreover, **intelligent men use them practically**. Studies do not teach their own uses. It is the wisdom of a person that teaches him to use them. The author says:

“Some books are to be tasted others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested.”

There are some books which have to be read – only in parts because they are useful to a person only in a certain place. It is not proper to read them word by word. On the contrary. Some books should not be read out of curiosity and some must be read with full attention and diligence as they require the full attention of the reader. Moreover, there are hidden treasures in this category of books that can only be found through the diligence of the reader.

Bacon says a useful line in favor of reading, and according to him, **“Reading maketh a Full Man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man.”**

It is reading that adds to a man’s knowledge and makes him complete in the sense of his wisdom. Undoubtedly, it is interaction with others that prepares a person practically. Furthermore, it is the skill of extensive or innovative writing that makes a complete person.

In addition, the author describes some facts about studies. He says that if a man writes less, he needs a great memory to remember all the learned things. If a person interacts less he needs a present and sharp intellect and if one reads a little he must be clever in knowing what he does not.

Bacon impresses the reader through his comprehensive and great sayings. He says,

**“Histories make men wise;
Poets, witty; the mathematics subtle;
natural philosophy, deep; moral grave;
logic and rhetoric, able to contend.”**

Bacon says that it is the history of the ancestors that makes the new generation wise and witty. These are the rules and regulations laid down by the ancients that make mathematics subtle. It is because of history that philosophy has deep meaning and can be defended through logic and rhetorical arguments. Bacon encloses the essay by saying;

“So every defect of the mind may have a special receipt.”

Conclusion

Bacon’s Of Studies essay deals with the benefits of the study to individuals in their daily lives. From reading books to writing papers, study plays an important role in a person’s life, making him learn, wise and experienced.

[Francis Bacon](#)’s essay is rich in intellectual wisdom, practical approach, and practical wisdom. Hence, it is considered the most beneficial essay for students and young people.