

UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS  
FRESHMAN LECTURES IV

CORRECT METHODS OF STUDY

Amos R. Wells, in a useful and entertaining little book named "How to Study", thus describes a procedure which some students mistake for study:

"Sitting before your books, you first estimate the length of the lesson,-- outrageously long! Then you compare it with yesterday's lesson,--the teacher is becoming more unreasonable every day! Then you count up the pages left to study, and cipher out how long it will take at three pages a day. No need of going so fast. Then you wonder if George has his lesson, and ask him. He hasn't. Then you read the lesson over. You don't understand a word of it. You ask George if he understands a word of it. He doesn't. Then you count up the number of days left in the term. Thirty-one days and six hours and three-quarters. You read the lesson once more -- a little clearer. You see by the clock that you have been studying half an hour. You ask George if he has to study half an hour. He does. You read the lesson once more. As dark as ever. Discouraged you draw a picture of the teacher -- an awful picture, with horns. By this time you have studied an hour, and that is all the time you can spend on this lesson. Lesson's too long anyway."

Notice, that although the student described accomplished nothing, he did put in an hour, and he did read the lesson three times. No doubt he felt virtuous. But by the same expenditure of time and effort, properly directed, he could have mastered the lesson and been prepared to handle the next with greater ease.

There are certain methods of study, and attitudes toward study, which make it easier, quicker, and more profitable. Here are some of these:

CONDITIONS OF STUDY

1. If interruptions prevent your study at the scheduled time, plan immediately another time to replace it. Don't just let it go.
2. If you don't like the subject, remember that there are interesting and intelligent people who find it fascinating. Resolve to try to find out what it is about the subject that interests them so much. The more interested you become in the subject the easier it will be to learn.
3. Don't quit when the subject becomes dull or tedious for a while. This is almost sure to happen, and if you deliberately look for interesting and surprising things, even in the dull assignments, you will usually find them.
4. Have a regular place for study, as comfortable and free from distractions as you can manage. Every distraction reduces your efficiency to some extent, even if you are not giving it your conscious attention.
5. If your neighbor's radio is too loud, don't give up and say you can't study. You can study in almost any environment if you have to, and want to badly enough. Get the best conditions you can, and if you refuse to give up you can quickly learn to ignore what you can't help.
6. Study alone if possible. Your friends can help you later, but you will have to learn by yourself in the beginning. Demosthenes shaved half his head so that he could study without the temptation to visit around. He got results.