

Academic Fortunes



Your future in the Information Age (Boot-up your mind.)

Face it. You're in for a lifetime of learning. That's what living in the Information Age, loaded with technology, will mean to you and your friends. You're already using computers to access and transfer information. In the future, the amount of information will continue to multiply enormously with every passing year. To keep whatever job you have, you'll have to continually learn to digest more and new information, then learn to apply or process it with technology that's constantly changing.

You won't have your parents' life

Education did not necessarily get your parents their jobs. Often, an employer was willing to "train" them for a job. However, your generation cannot be trained for jobs that don't even exist yet. Your working world will be nothing like your parents' world. The experts say you'll change jobs many times, and you'll need the skills to adapt and learn. Your learning won't stop at college graduation.

Exercise your mind

Just as sports and exercise strengthen your body and health, education strengthens your mind and intellect. You should be using school *to learn how to learn: to exercise your mental muscles.* It's like doing intellectual sit-ups.

You already know about the value of physical exercise. Let's look at a student who just sits around a lot, who has never played sports, has never exercised, and has eaten junk food and played computer games all his life. At age 18, he is told that his life suddenly depends on running the hurdles in an upcoming track event. What are the chances he will win the race? What are the chances he will even clear the first hurdle?

But runners who have been training for these hurdles throughout high school will sail over them because they're in shape and they know how. So it is with learning: Exercising your mind in high school gets it into shape for the academic and career hurdles ahead.



Be college smart. *“But,” you say, “I have a friend who knows ‘this person’ who never even finished college and is a multimillionaire.”* There's no question that some part of life depends on luck. A few people win the lottery. Most don't. If you just sit around waiting for “good fortune,” you'll waste a lot of time that you might spend creating your future.

How important is your education today?

Since you'll have to spend most of your life as a learner, you might as well get learning under control. If you do, you'll find the other parts of your life will be a lot easier and more enjoyable. Plus, your education will take on a very practical and personal meaning for you.

High grades in college-prep courses, high academic achievement, an excellent high school record, a distinctive extracurricular effort, and enthusiastic letters of recommendation from teachers — all these translate into more than honors, awards, and getting into the college you want. They translate into prospects for your future, a great feeling of achievement, confidence, enjoyment, excitement, personal stability, and, yes, money. Money? In college you could be eligible for grants and scholarships (money you don't have to pay back) and financial aid (low-interest loans). Later, in life, successful students typically build strong earning potential (a salary) for themselves.

You could say this book is about taking control: control of your education, and, ultimately, your whole life. And the more control you have of your education, the more control you have of your future. Get serious! **Be college smart.** Your life depends on it.

PSST!

PSST! Read the highlights. They will give you a quick overview of why knowing how to learn is so important to your life. If you thought learning was something that you did only while you sat in a classroom, you're mistaken. For your generation, it's a major life skill.