

College Guild

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U.S. Education

~Education and Learning Outside of School~

Unit 5 of 6

Learning doesn't stop when you're no longer in school or classes are not in session. Actually, these are excellent times to continue to learn and build your knowledge. In this unit, we'll talk about some of the ways you can learn and continue your education outside of schools and give you some ideas of how to do this in your daily life.

Education vs. Learning

While "education" and "learning" may seem to refer to the same thing, the difference between the two is as important as it is surprising to many people.

In general, **education** is a process in which a student gains new skills, knowledge, and values in a formal setting such as a classroom or course. Though it is still about acquiring new skills, knowledge and values, **learning** implies a less formal process that is ongoing, and doesn't need to occur within a classroom, school, or formal framework. To oversimplify the difference between the two a bit, **education** is something you receive directly, often from a teacher or through a prescribed curriculum, while **learning** is something you gain through experience.

1. **Create two columns, one labeled "Advantages of learning in a classroom" and the other labeled "Advantages of learning outside of a classroom." Write 3–5 things in each column.**
2. **Think of something you learned how to do outside of school, then write a story or poem about how you learned it.**
3. **Think of something you learned in school. Explain how you learned it, and how you felt while learning it.**

Lifelong Learning

People are constantly learning new things in a variety of different ways throughout their lives. This idea of constantly being a student and continuing to learn outside of the classroom is called lifelong learning. Lifelong learners are people who never stop learning new things, skills, and information, constantly growing as people by pursuing knowledge, even if they're not in a physical classroom. For lifelong learners, the world is their classroom and their teachers themselves, their friends, and their experiences.

4. **List three benefits of lifelong learning.**

5. **Think of a friend or person who taught you something as part of your lifelong learning. Explain what they taught you and how.**
6. **How can you encourage the people in your life to become lifelong learners?**
7. **Draw a poster encouraging people to pursue lifelong learning. Have fun with it!**

Ways to Learn Outside Schools

While it may seem as though education and learning in the U.S. is centered around the education system and schools, there are plenty of resources, places, and ways to learn outside the walls of schools. But however plentiful and accessible these opportunities may be, people often struggle to pursue them.

8. **What are three reasons that someone may not pursue learning opportunities outside of school?**

Courses Outside of Schools

Just because a person can't be in a physical school does not mean they can't take classes. In fact, you're doing this right now—College Guild is just one example of a program that can be taken outside of school, so by taking this course, you are becoming a lifelong learner. Doesn't it feel great? College Guild is one great example, but the possibilities don't stop there.

9. **Why did you choose to take College Guild Courses? How have they helped you in your pursuit of lifelong learning and education?**
10. **What other courses would you like to see from College Guild?**

Possibilities for Courses Around the World

There are lots of options of classes that can be taken outside of schools at community centers, libraries, senior centers, YMCAs, and other organizations. Some of these courses are taught online, which is growing increasingly popular as technology advances. This has made it possible for people to take courses through institutions in other cities, states, or even countries! There are tons of lifelong learning programs to be found in the world, making it possible to learn from an ever-expanding group of people and experiences.

11. **What are three advantages and three disadvantages to online learning?**
12. **If you could take a course from any institution in any country in the world, what would you choose?**

Teaching Yourself a New Skill

People can also do a lot of learning on their own. Learning a new skill can be easily achieved through goal setting and resources such as books or videos. The skills can be anything from origami (paper folding), to math, to a new language. The best part of teaching yourself a new skill is that you get to be both the teacher and the student. You get to plan the lessons and learn what way works best for you, without having to worry about dealing with teachers trying to structure their lessons for a whole class of students.

13. **What is one of the advantages of being your own teacher? What about one disadvantage?**
14. **If you had to teach yourself a skill, what skill would you teach yourself and why?**
15. **What steps would you take to begin to learn this skill?**

Books

Books come in all shapes and sizes with something for everyone. Reading has been proven to have numerous benefits aside from the obvious entertainment value, and is a great way to keep the mind sharp. Reading also improves focus and concentration and builds vocabulary and knowledge of language, which leads to better writing skills. Reading specific kinds of books can help you develop skills and knowledge in other areas. For example, reading a “How to Draw” book will help to teach the reader about drawing techniques and ideas. There are also plenty of non-fiction books about interesting subjects that can be educational as well as entertaining to read. Reading a book on philosophy by Descartes would help to develop the reader’s critical thinking and logic skills, while reading a book about the Civil War might help someone gain context about the architecture, politics, and social mores of the part of the country in which they live.

The best place to start is often a library, which can hold hundreds, even thousands, of books for free! In fact, education for young children often starts prior to public school right in their local public library, thanks to their abundance of fun children’s literature and classes for parents and kids alike.

16. **If you were to write a book, what would the title be? What would it be about?**
17. **Design a cover for your book and write a few sentences to go on the back cover as a summary of the book.**
18. **Pretend you are an enthusiastic book critic and write a review of your book
OR pretend you are a grouchy book critic and write a review of your book.**

Learning About Yourself

In reality, one of the best resources for learning might be yourself. Activities like self reflection and meditation can lead to self discovery and personal growth by encouraging you to learn about your own strengths and weaknesses. Often, learning about yourself is the first step to making larger changes in your life.

19. **As a place to start, try to sit still (you can do it as is shown in the graphic above or however works best for you), think about nothing, and let your body relax. Then begin to think about yourself and see what you can find out. Try to do it every day for at least 5 minutes until Unit 6 arrives. Write any notes here about things that came up for you during meditation, if you like.**

Learning About Others

In a similar vein, learning about other people is also a great way to continue your education outside of school. By having conversations or forming relationships with others, you can begin to learn about other

points of view, skills, and ideas. Having mutually respectful discussions with friends about tough topics such as religious, political, or philosophical issues allows you to learn more about other people. It also allows you to learn more about your views on these issues and develop your thinking, interpersonal, and conflict resolution skills.

- 20. Imagine that you are planning to have a discussion with a few people you know. Write three questions about tough topics to get a conversation and discussion started.**
- 21. Imagine you are having a conflict with one of your friends. How would you start a respectful discussion to solve the problem?**

Places to Learn

Places like museums, zoos, or aquariums, and events like speeches or conventions are also great ways to learn as they often have specific information about history, animals, or any number of interesting things. This information is often paired with artifacts, living or not, that add visuals to the learning experience that provide context and broaden understanding. These types of events and places offer unique and exciting ways to learn, and are often places that people go to for fun in their free time. They can be a great place to expand your learning outside the classroom, especially for those who have trouble focusing in a traditional school environment.

- 22. Write a letter to a friend about a museum you've visited (real or fictional). Be sure to tell them why you picked that museum and what you learned.**

Learning in Everyday Life

Sometimes, you don't have to go anywhere or do anything to learn. You can continue your education by simply living your life and going about your day. You can learn new things by recognizing patterns, asking questions, or trying new things. There are so many new things to notice in your day by just observing and looking at things with the eye of a student. Keep your eyes open, study things in your own environment, or write about what you see. Lifelong learning is something you can do without any extra materials, it just takes a little more effort and a different point of view in order to learn things from your life.

- 23. Write an essay, poem, or story about what "the eye of a student" means to you and how you can use it to learn.**

Large Scale Teaching and Learning

Learning outside of school is not limited to the individual level—large groups and even whole societies learn and change all the time. Big events and ideas can move through groups quickly and, as more and more people learn about them, they can spread and change the thinking of an entire group or society. One example of this is the American Revolution. The colonies began to learn about mistreatment from the British and, as they learned of new ideas about liberty and human rights, they began to discuss the idea of a revolution. This idea quickly gained steam and turned into a reality. Eventually, after the Revolutionary War, all of the colonies were on board and started their own country in 1776.

Large scale teaching and learning is happening all of the time as societies continue to evolve and change and new ideas emerge and spread.

- 24. What is another example of an entire society learning something together?**
- 25. What is one thing you would like society to learn and change? Write an essay explaining your ideas and why they should spread.**

Remember: First names only & please let us know if your address changes