

Now for the good news. Once you understand the logic behind modern schooling, its tricks and traps are fairly easy to avoid. School trains children to be employees and consumers; teach your own to be leaders and adventurers. School trains children to obey reflexively; teach your own to think critically and independently. Well-schooled kids have a low threshold for boredom; help your own to develop an inner life so that they'll never be bored. Urge them to take on the serious material, the *grown-up* material, in history, literature, philosophy, music, art, economics, theology—all the stuff schoolteachers know well enough to avoid. Challenge your kids with plenty of solitude so that they can learn to enjoy their own company, to conduct inner dialogues. Well-schooled people are conditioned to dread being alone, and they seek constant companionship through the TV, the computer, the cell phone, and through shallow friendships quickly acquired and quickly abandoned. Your children should have a more meaningful life, and they can.

First, though, we must wake up to what our schools really are: laboratories of experimentation on young minds, drill centers for the habits and attitudes that corporate society demands. Mandatory education serves children only incidentally; its real purpose is to turn them into servants. Don't let your own have their childhoods extended, not even for a day. If David Farragut could take command of a captured British warship as a preteen, if Thomas Edison could publish a broadsheet at the age of twelve, if Ben Franklin could apprentice himself to a printer at the same age (then put himself through a course of study that would choke a Yale senior today), there's no telling what your own kids could do. After a long life, and thirty years in the public school trenches, I've concluded that genius is as common as dirt. We suppress our genius only because we haven't yet figured out how to manage a population of educated men and women. The solution, I think, is simple and glorious. Let them manage themselves.

JOHN

How To Children

John Holt (1923–1985) was born in the East Coast. Though he often preferred not to name them, he knew so much about I did. Holt performed fieldwork with *Children Fail* (1964) and *How to Teach Your Own* (1981). He spent years attempting to facilitate how to make schools better. His information in his thinking. He was futile because schools were not based on knowledge on children. As a result (1976, 2002), a work which provided a rationale for attempting to mold young children to learn. As a result of Holt's work, the percentage grew to reach 3 to 4 percent. His other work continues to rise. Holt's other work is *Teach Your Own* (1981).

When I was teaching English, I used to ask my students to usually ask about reading. I would try to get me to give them a game of wits. I never really thought about a book. I gave vocabulary drills and time they came upon a word were to look it up in the dictionary tests, allowing them to

John Holt, "How Teachers Make Children Fail"
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