

THE THINKER

GATE/SAS Student Newsletter

Spring 2012

Keep away from people who try to belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that, but the really great make you feel that you, too, can become great.

Mark Twain



Nobody's Perfect!

Here are a few more successful figures who struggled on their paths to greatness. Just a friendly reminder to persevere!

- ✓ Soichiro Honda, founder of the billion dollar Honda corporation, was turned down by the Toyota Motor Corporation for an engineering job. Jobless and making scooters at home, he decided to start his own business instead.
- ✓ Actor Sidney Poitier was told by the casting director at his first audition to "stop wasting other people's time." He went on to become the first African American to win an Academy Award for Best Actor.
- ✓ Painter Vincent Van Gogh sold only one painting during his lifetime (to a friend for a small amount of money). His artwork (over 800 known pieces) is now displayed around the world and worth hundreds of millions of dollars.

Book Lovers!

The Library of Congress website www.read.gov has a variety of online resources for kids and teens. Read free classic e-books, view author webcasts, enter literature-related contests, and much more!

Today's Mantra!

A "mantra" is a statement that is frequently repeated (often in your head) to allow you to transform your thinking. Here's a helpful mantra for those of you who get frustrated when things (including yourself) are not perfect:

Nobody's perfect, and nobody's good at everything. (Learn to give the things that matter the most to you the most time and energy... and give yourself a break on the other things.)

The Gifted Kids' Survival Guide

Quick Quiz

1. Is your schoolwork mostly easy for you to do?
2. Do you usually finish ahead of others in your class?
3. Do you hate it when you're not allowed to work ahead?
4. Do you ever get teased for being smart, weird, or nerdy?
5. Are you good at a lot of different things?
6. Do you like being challenged at school?
7. When you think about things no one else thinks of, do you wonder why your brain works the way it does?
8. Do your parents and teachers expect you to get straight A's?
9. Has anyone ever said, "If you're so smart, why didn't you... (ace the test, know the answer, get everything right, etc.)?"

If you answered yes to some, most, or all of these questions, here are some tips for you:

- Talk to your teachers and

parents about your interests and needs to ensure that your learning time is maximized and your stress level is under control.

- Get involved in and outside of school. Start or join clubs, student council, or service groups. Check out libraries, community centers, and museums. Think about what interests you and find a way to explore your passion.
- Start a book club with your friends. Select a book each month and set up monthly meetings to discuss your thoughts. Tip: Local libraries and bookstores may have suggestions for titles or resources for starting a book club. For start-up help, visit www.kidsreads.com/clubs.
- Get a mentor. Identify an adult or older peer who can help you explore your special interests or talents. This may be a disciplinarian in the field you are interested in, like science, music, or art.

Adapted from *The Gifted Kids' Survival Guide* by Judy Galbraith.

Curriculum Compacting

Have you ever sat through an entire lesson thinking, "I already know how to do this — why am I sitting here?" Many gifted or high achieving students have already mastered certain academic standards before they are actually taught in class. It isn't a good use of your time to sit through a lesson if you already know what is being taught... especially when you could be learning something new! A valuable teaching strategy to address this common situation is called "Curriculum Compacting." Basically, it means that if you can show that you already know how to do something (through assessment), you will be given a more challenging replacement task. **This does not mean you will get more of the same work or become a peer helper.** The alternate task you receive may be a variation of the lesson the rest of the class is learning or something completely different, based on your needs. You may be able to work at a Learning Center or on an Independent Study Project. The task may last for one lesson, one day, or longer depending on how much of the curriculum you need "compacted."

Talk to your teacher if you think Curriculum Compacting may be right for you.

Making a Difference Through Service Learning

Service learning provides an authentic, meaningful way for students, teachers, parents, and community members to work toward a common purpose of making a positive difference. Service learning helps students because they are able to apply academic skills and concepts to "real life" problems while gaining a deeper understanding of themselves, their community, and their society.

Here are the four main categories of service:

- **Direct** — Face-to-face services such as tutoring or working with elders
 - **Indirect** — Services that affect an entire community such as donating books, collecting canned goods, or restoring an environment
 - **Advocacy** — Creating awareness or promoting action such as a letter writing campaign or public speaking
 - **Research** — Finding, gathering, and reporting on information in the public interest
- To get started, think of the needs that exist in your community. Select one need, find out what is already being done, and figure out ways you can help. Create an action plan — identify who can help, what they can do, and the time/resources needed. For more ideas, read *The Complete Guide to Service Learning* by Berger Kaye or talk to your teacher.

Brain Teasers: Word Play!

Look at the list of words below:

1. Banana
2. Dresser
3. Grammar
4. Potato
5. Revive
6. Uneven
7. Assess



Can you figure out what these seven words have in common? Let your mind play with the words and letters before peeking at the answer (below).

Answer: If you take the first letter, place it at the end of the word, and then spell it backwards, it will be the same word.

Fun with Palindromes

Like “a Toyota” or “Civic,” I’m just as good in reverse. What am I? *A palindrome!* Palindromes are words, phrases, or sentences that read the same backward or forward.

Here are some fun palindrome riddles:

1. What verb becomes a palindrome when viewed upside down and backwards?
2. What time of day, when written in capital letters, is the same forwards, backwards, and upside down?
3. What call for help, when written in capital letters, is the same forwards, backwards, and upside down?

SOS	3.
NOON	2.
SWIMS	1.

More palindrome words:

Dad Madam Rotator
 Did Mom Sagas
 Gag Pop Sees
 Kayak Racecar Solos
 Level Radar Wow

Funny palindrome phrases:

Bald elf fled lab
 Ma handed Edna ham
 Yo banana boy

Can you make up your own palindrome phrases?

Adapted from <http://kids.niehs.gov>

Things That Make You Go Hmmm...

Have you ever wondered about something that doesn't have a simple answer (or has many answers depending on your perspective)? This is called **philosophical thinking**, and it is great for brain development and shaping how you view the world.

Here are some big questions for you to ponder, discuss, and debate:

- What is love?
- Is beauty a matter of fact or a matter of taste?
- What is the purpose of art?
- Is lying always wrong?
- Do animals have rights?
- Why do bad things sometimes happen to good people?

When thinking about these ques-

tions, ask yourself:

- Who might disagree with me and what would they think?
- What evidence do I have to support my opinion?
- Would my answer change depending on the situation?

For more big questions, read *Philosophy for Teens: Questioning Life's Big Ideas* by Kaye & Thompson.

In Good Company: Famous Faces in Gifted Programs

Being identified gifted does not mean much unless you do something with it! Here are some famous people who participated in gifted programs (or were recognized for their high ability in school) AND used their strengths and talents to make significant contributions in their field. Their paths were all different (and sometimes rocky) but these individuals all used their strengths to follow their dreams.

Sergey Brin — Computer scientist, internet entrepreneur, and co-founder of

Google

Lady Gaga — Grammy, MTV video, and Billboard Award-winning musician, entertainer, and founder of non-profit organization “Born this Way Foundation” to support self-confidence, well-being, anti-bullying, and mentoring

Natalie Portman — Academy Award-winning actress, Harvard graduate, and published scientific researcher

Lil Wayne — Grammy, BET, MTV video, Teen Choice, Source, and Vibe Award-winning rapper and founder of

non-profit “One Family Foundation, Inc.” to empower urban youth to cultivate their talents and skills

Mark Zuckerberg — Founder of Facebook and Time Person of the Year, 2010



How will YOU use your gifts and talents to make a positive contribution to your community and the world?