

Life of Fred
Farming

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A Note Before We Begin the Sixth Book in the Series

The year was 1970. I bought a small fish tank and put it on my desk. I filled it with water and added a plastic plant and a thermometer.

An instant later, my one-year-old had converted it into part of her education.

Jill had climbed up on her own. The thermometer was in her left hand. The water and the plastic plant were about to be investigated.

I guess you could call it part of home schooling.

Kids love to learn. They want to know everything about everything:

- ◇ Why are some curbs painted red?
- ◇ What do pennies taste like?
- ◇ Where do babies come from?
- ◇ If $f:A \rightarrow B$ and $g:B \rightarrow A$ are two one-to-one functions, how can we show that there must exist a function $h:A \rightarrow B$ that is both one-to-one and onto?*

It takes a lot of effort to kill a child's love of learning. If you are interested in doing that, here's how to do it:

How to Kill the Love of Learning

1. Lock a child in a room ("classroom") for hours with 20 other kids.
2. Insert a guard ("teacher") who really doesn't love learning. (It helps if the teacher majored in "education" or in "general studies," rather than in a real academic major.) People who teach history should love history.



Education

* I get this question all the time. We answer it in the first chapter of *Life of Fred: Calculus*.

Those who teach math should love mathematics. The *Acid Test*: Do the teachers of XYZ talk about XYZ with their spouses and friends? Do they read and learn new things about XYZ?

Would you want to study oenology (pronounced ee-KNOLL-eh-gee) from someone who doesn't drink?

3. Make sure there are lots of external rewards (A+!) and punishments attached to the "education." Don't let the learning itself be the reward. Focus on getting the diploma or the degree.
4. Do not let a child get carried away with any subject. Set a schedule of 50 minutes per day for each of the five required subjects. If a child gets fascinated with how log cabins are built or with reading Dante's description of the horrors of hell, make sure they do it "on their own time." This will teach them that "education" and their own interests are two different things.
5. Finally, if you want to kill a child's love of learning, it is critically important that you do not become a good role model. Don't do any serious, sustained, and joyful adult learning of your own. Just read murder mysteries or romance novels, talk on the phone a lot, and watch daytime television.



On the positive side . . . that one-year-old who had climbed up to study my aquarium never spent a day in an American high school classroom. Home schooling doesn't take as long as government schooling. There are no football rallies or teacher-training days to get in the way of learning.

At 13½ she finished her high school studies and became a college student.

At 15 she headed to Europe for a year as an exchange student.

At 20 she graduated from the University of California, Berkeley.

Isn't it amazing what a little work with a fish tank will do?



BY NOW YOU KNOW
HOW THESE BOOKS ARE ORGANIZED

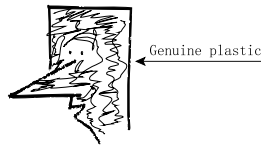
Each chapter is six pages. At the end of each chapter is a Your Turn to Play. Your child writes out all the answers to each Your Turn to Play before looking at the answers on the next page.

Just reading the questions and looking at the answers is passive learning. It doesn't work. It's like trying to learn how to ride a bicycle by just reading about it.

CALCULATORS?

Not now.

Kill the Love of Learning
and you get . . .



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Chapter One

Working at Night

Kingie is just your average doll who enjoys doing oil painting. When Fred was about four days old, he got Kingie as a free toy at King of French Fries.



It wasn't until Fred (and Kingie) became five years old that Fred learned how good Kingie was at art.

Most of the time Kingie did his oil painting when Fred was gone. When Fred was teaching or visiting Edgewood, Kentucky, Kingie would take out his oil paints and begin working.

Kingie did his best when it was quiet and he could concentrate on the work he was doing. No radio. No television.

During the night when Fred was sleeping was a perfect time for Kingie to paint. When Fred was awake, he liked to talk to Kingie and hug him. That made it difficult for Kingie to pay attention to his painting.

Dolls (and people) often do trashy work when there are too many distractions.



small essay

A Secret about Dolls

Have you ever noticed that many dolls have this big vacant stare? Their big glassy eyes don't seem to be looking at anything.

If you ask them what is $8 + 9$, they will just look at you and not say 17.

Everyone knows that eight plus nine is seventeen, but many dolls will just sit there. Do you know why?

The answer is that many dolls stay up all night. While you are sleeping, they use that quiet time to get their work done.

By morning, when you wake up, they are really tired. Some dolls sleep all day with their eyes open.

Now you know their secret.



asleep

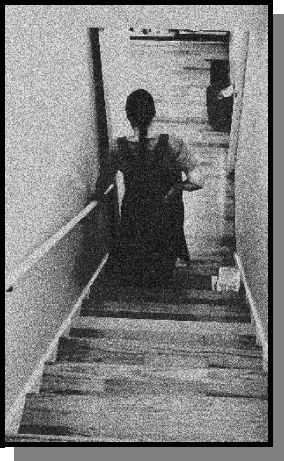


Fred was sleeping. He was tired out from his trip to Edgewood. It was a quarter to one in the morning.

Kingie was just finishing up his second oil painting of the



12:45 a.m.



Woman Descending Stairs
by Kingie

night. He had used a dry brush to make the picture grainy. That gave a dreamlike feeling to the painting.


As with many of Kingie's paintings, you are drawn into the painting.

You start to think:

- ◇ Those stairs seems steep.
- ◇ Where is she going?
- ◇ Why is she holding her

back?

With great art, you remember it long after you have seen it.

But dolls are not the only nocturnal* things. As Kingie worked, he could hear some sounds coming from Fred's backpack. It was a cute little mouse that had sneaked into his  backpack when he was on the bus to Edgewood.

The mouse came up and stood beside Kingie. He gave the mouse a little pat on the head. Here was an animal that Kingie liked. He was terrified of cats and dogs, but mice were different. Kingie now had a pet of his own.

* KNOCK-turn-el Active at night.

Kingie knew that mice eat just about anything. They are not obligate carnivores (like cats who must eat meat).

Kingie tiptoed over to Fred's desk. He didn't want to wake Fred who was in his sleeping bag under the desk.

Everyone knows that Fred is not a big eater.* Whenever he gets any food, he sticks it in his pocket and says, "for later." Then he puts it in his desk. When Kingie opened the desk, he found 14 pounds of food.

There was 5 lbs. in one drawer and 9 lbs. in another drawer. (lbs. is an abbreviation for pounds.)

There were 6 lbs. of sandwiches and 8 lbs. of other stuff.

$$\begin{array}{r} 5 \\ + 9 \\ \hline 14 \end{array} \qquad \begin{array}{r} 6 \\ + 8 \\ \hline 14 \end{array}$$

Please memorize these before you turn the page. There is no hurry. The mouse is enjoying one of Fred's sandwiches.

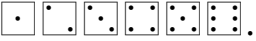
* *Fred is not a big eater* is an example of litotes. (LIE-toe-tease) Here are other examples of litotes: *A billion dollars (\$1,000,000,000) is not a small amount of money. The Pacific Ocean is not a little pond. A toothpick is not a fat log. A dime is not a heavy coin.*

Litotes are fun to invent.

Please take out a piece of paper and write down the answers. Then turn the page and compare your answers to mine.

You will learn a lot more that way than just reading the questions and reading the answers.

Your Turn to Play

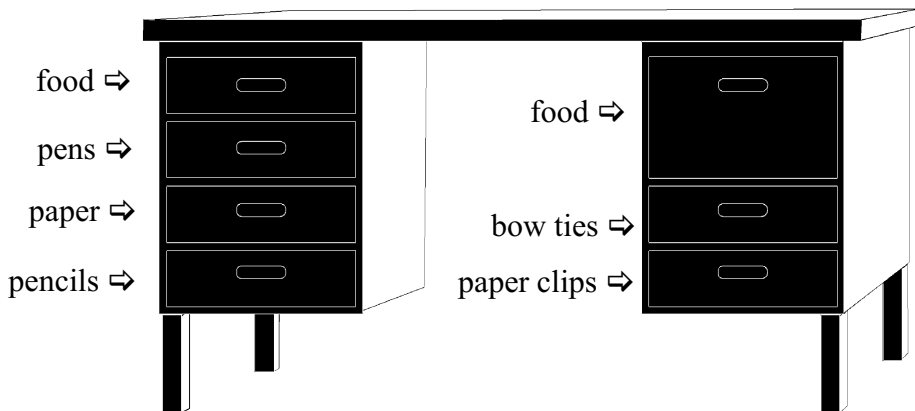
1. Name a value for x that will make this true:
 $x + 6 = 14$.
2. Name a value for y to make this true: $14 - y = 5$.
3. Name a value for z that will make this true: $z > 99$.
4. A die has six different faces: 

If you shook two dice, how could they add up to 10?

5. (Harder question) We know that there were 5 lbs. of food in one drawer and 9 lbs. in another drawer.

We also know that of the 14 lbs. of food, 6 lbs. are sandwiches.

Does that mean that both drawers must contain sandwiches?



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After you have read the elementary *Life of Fred: ABCDEFGH* . . . books, there are 14 hardback *Life of Fred* books that will take you all the way up into your third year of college.

Fred doesn't end.

(for details, see the next page.)