

What high school is and learning to read

[Education](#), [School](#)



“ What High School Is” by Theodore Sizer and “ Learning to Read” by Malcolm X Learning has an important role in human beings society. By learning a person can gain more knowledge and understanding in order to contribute to the development of society. Learning can be performed in various ways. Specifically, there are two completely different types of learning that produce strength and weakness based on general educational experience. Mark, a Franklin high school student, is described in “ What High School Is” by Theodore Sizer.

On the other hand, Malcolm X, who was convicted of robbery in 1946, came out of jail with the knowledge of Black history and the great questionable of Elijah Muhammad, who was the leader of the Nation of Islam (1935-1975). By analyzing the weakness and strength of the education of Mark and Malcolm, the educational experience of Malcolm is ascribed better, and it inspires those who really seek the benefit of learning. Mark, sixteen years old and a genial grader, has both strength and weakness in his educational experience. First, he has better opportunity for well-rounded education. As a high school junior, Mark has to study various subjects.

His obligation is to follow different classes such as English class, typing class, biology class, French class, history class and mathematics class. The approximate time spent for each class is around forty to fifty minutes. Moreover, Mark receives specific guidance and particular structure in every class in which he attends. For instance, Ms. Viola, the English teacher, has her students in turn take parts and read out loud (Sizer 20). In addition to the strong points, Mark has a chance to partake in social study group at his school. For example, at Biology class, Mr. Robbins, the teacher, requires his

students to form a circle of three or so in order to study the specimen and to take notes about it (Sizer 22). However, there is also weakness in Mark's educational experience. He mostly encounters a daily external distraction of walking from class to class. Therefore, his education is less profound effect since he has to do other things instead of focusing on studying. Constantly, he has little desire to learn and has no specific goal. As an illustration, Mark feels frustrated, uncomfortable and scared that he won't be able to complete his letter (Sizer 21), and that " Tomorrow, and virtually every other tomorrow, will be the same for Mark" (Sizer 24).

In contrast, Malcolm, who was imprisoned for seven years in Charlestown Prison, had totally different strengths in his education. One of the strengths was that Malcolm had a great desire to learn new knowledge. In Charlestown prison, he started his desire of learning from a feeling envy of stock of knowledge of Bimbi (X 78). Moreover, Malcolm kept book-reading motions even though he " really ended up with little idea of what the book said" (X 78). Then he began copying into his tablet all words printed on the dictionary's pages in order to understand books (X 78-79).

In addition to the strong points, Malcolm had few distractions during the time he studied in prison. The only distraction was from the night guards. At night (from 10pm to 4am), while Malcolm was reading and learning in the dim glow of a light, he often had to jump into his bed and feign sleep whenever he heard the approaching footsteps of the night guards (X 80). Therefore, studying had a profound effect on him because he spent almost fifteen hours studying without distraction. Malcolm's education, known as homemade education, is a better form of educational experience.

He had specific goal for his reading and learning although he spent seven years in prison. His goal was to serve the black man in term of Black and White separatism in the 1950's in United States. His meaningful goal led to great reading and learning of certain subjects, such as Black history, Genetics, slavery, Chinese world history and philosophy. Constantly, he says, " You will never catch me with a free fifteen minutes in which I'm not studying something I feel might be able to help the black man (X 85). Moreover, Malcolm's education is really an educational experience.

Unlike Mark's education, Malcolm had to begin his fundamental education by learning the vocabulary. Henceforth, he daily spent numerous hours on reading books to gain knowledge and understanding. He himself did that spectacular job without any specific guidance, except for his curiosity only. He said, " I could spend the rest of my life reading, just satisfying my curiosity-because you can hardly mention anything I'm not curious about" (X 85). On the other hand, reading for the sake of knowledge was a significant way to help Malcolm feel a sense of freedom in spite of being in prison.

Truly, the more he read, the freer he felt. He concludes that " I don't think anybody ever got more out of going to prison than I did. In fact, prison enabled me to study far more intensely than I would have if my life had gone differently and I had attended some college. " (X 85) In short, Mark represents students' learning style. Meanwhile, Malcolm represents prisoners' learning style. In fact, both Mark and Malcolm have strength and weakness in their educational experiences. Therefore, the best learning way is to eliminate the weakness and to develop strength in personal skill and talent.