

Past does matter



July 23, Past Does Matter The past has a definitive role in determining the future of humans. Human civilization has developed into its current status by learning lessons from the past and absorbing the virtues and values imbibed by previous generations. The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin can be considered as a most valuable treasure not only for the American society of this century but also for generations to come. The writer gives different interpretation of the concept of success in this work. The author is one of America's founding fathers but he is not a born leader. He has attained success of such a magnitude by dint of his hard work and strength of character, "having emerged from poverty and obscurity" (Franklin 3). His success story is a saga of incessant hard work and dedication by which Franklin has been able to rise from humble beginnings to a world renowned leader and the younger generations of this nation can draw a lot of inspiration from his exemplary life. Though born into the poor family of a candle maker, Franklin had a passion for reading and writing right from the early stages of his life. His unabated zest made him read each and every book he could lay his hands on, with the intention of becoming a writer. His family did not have the resources to afford proper education for their children. However, this did not drench his spirits and he became a self taught man. He began writing anonymously at the age of fourteen because he was sure that his brother would not publish him in his newly started newspaper. This was the starting point of the great writer that he later became. Thus, Franklin sends a message through his autobiography that any person who possesses determination and will power can reach the position he yearns for. This is a valuable lesson for future generations and, thus, it transpires that knowing the past will help people to learn valuable lessons

about life and how to make it successful. Franklin became intellectually, scientifically, socially and politically successful and America developed under his leadership into its current position as a major power in the world. Those who recognize his traits as a leader draw inspiration from his autobiography and learn how to be successful in the modern world. He advises that in order to achieve success in any field one must have a good reputation, which derives from one's character. He also says that in order to secure his credit and character as a tradesman he took care that in reality he will be "industrious and frugal" (Franklin 56). He did not waste his money, nor did he ever drink in excess. He advises the future generations never to waste time on useless activities that would prevent them from doing their work.

Moreover, he exhorts common people that by cultivating good habits and toiling hard, they could be successful. Franklin's autobiography thus offers many valuable lessons and if a person reads this, he or she will understand how the past can inspire them to pursue success in their lives. These are not simple theories floated by a person, but real account of his life, the story of his success, which will provide valid insights to youngsters about the true values of life. Franklin grew up to be one of the most influential people in the world. He contends that the essence of success is not mere achievement. In order to be completely successful his life, one has to be morally virtuous.

These are the views cherished by great philosophers like Aristotle, Dante etc. Franklin thus also embarks on a mission of passing on the values he learned from his forefathers to the next generation, by postulating such canons in his autobiography. Benjamin Franklin convinces all those who read his autobiography to take the right action always in their life even if others are doing wrong things. He persuades people to be truthful and virtuous in their

lives if they want success. He claims that the “ present little sacrifice of your vanity will afterwards be amply repaid” (Franklin 66). From the teachings of the author, it becomes evident that the past has much significance as a source to gain knowledge about the virtues and values that were upheld by previous generations. Work Cited Franklin, Benjamin. The autobiography of Benjamin Franklin. Forgotten Books. 1979. Print.