



# 大学英语

**My Advice to Students:  
Education Counts**

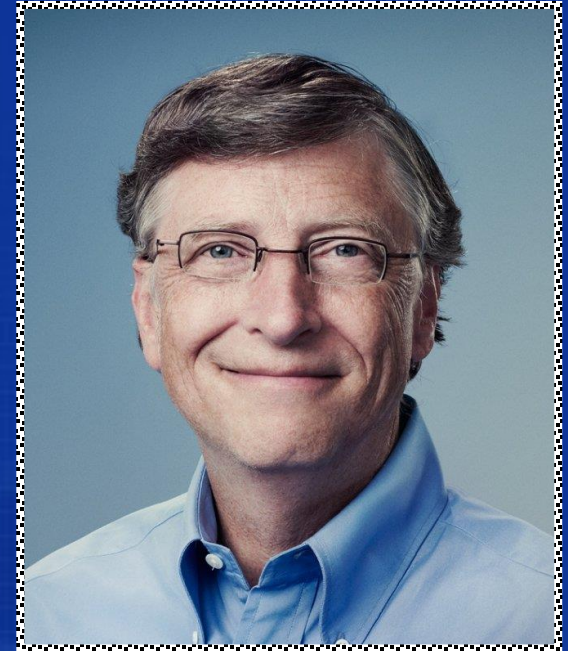
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# My Advice to Students: Education Counts

Hundreds of students send me e-mail each year asking for advice about education. They want to know what to study, or whether it's okay to drop out of college since that's what I did.

A smaller number of parents send messages, seeking guidance for their son or daughter. "How can we steer our child toward success?" they ask.



My basic advice is simple and heartfelt: Get the best education you can. Take advantage of high school and college. Learn how to learn.





It's true that I dropped out of college to start Microsoft, but I was at Harvard for three years before dropping out — and I'd love to have the time to go back. As I've said before, nobody should drop out of college unless they believe they face the opportunity of a lifetime. And even then they should reconsider.



Kathy Cridland, a sixth-grade teacher in Ohio, wrote to say, “Several of my students claim that you never finished high school. Since you are a success, my students perceive that as a reason not to care much about getting a good education.”

I finished high school!

The computer industry has lots of people who didn't finish college, but I'm not aware of any success stories that began with somebody dropping out of high school. I actually don't know any high school dropouts, let alone any successful ones.





In my company's early years we had a bright part-time programmer who threatened to drop out of high school to work full-time. We told him no.

Quite a few of our people didn't finish college, but we discourage dropping out. Having a diploma certainly helps somebody who is looking to us for a job.

College isn't the only place where information exists. You can learn in a library. But somebody handing you a book doesn't automatically foster learning. You want to learn with other people, ask questions, try out ideas and have a way to test your ability. It usually takes more than just a book.

Education should be broad, although it's fine to have deep interests, too.







In high school there were periods when I was highly focused on writing software, but for most of my high school years I had wide-ranging academic interests. My parents encouraged this, and I'm grateful that they did.

Although I attended a lot of different kinds of classes in college, I signed up for only one computer class the whole time. I read about all kinds of things.



One parent wrote me that her 15-year-old son "lost himself in the hole of the computer." He got an A in website design, but other grades were sinking, she said.

This boy is making a mistake. High school and college offer you the best chance to learn broadly — math, history, various sciences — and to do projects with other kids that teach you first-hand about group dynamics. It's fine to take a deep interest in computers, dance, language or any other discipline, but not if it jeopardizes breadth.



## Read & Explore



If you fall into an obsessive pattern in high school, you've got two problems. One is that you're unlikely to change when you go to college. The other is that if you don't get reasonably good grades, it's hard to go to a college that has the highly motivated, capable students who can really help you learn about the world.



In college it's appropriate to think about specialization. Getting real expertise in an area of interest can lead to success — unless the specialty ends up being a dead end or you're not good at. Graduate school is one way to get specialized knowledge, although extended college education isn't always a good investment from a purely economic standpoint.





It's true that I dropped out of college to start Microsoft, but I was at Harvard for three years before dropping out — and I'd love to have the time to go back.

### *Key*

**It's true that I left college early to start Microsoft, but I was at Harvard for three years before I left, and if I had the time I'd love to go back (for my further study).**





**opportunity** *n.*

— a favorable moment or occasion (for doing something)

### *Examples*

- It will give you an opportunity to meet all kinds of people.
- Don't let slip any opportunity of practicing your English.





**claim** *v.*

— say that something is true or is a fact without having any proof

### *Examples*

- Jean claims to own a car but I don't believe her.
- He claimed that he had done the work without help.







Since you are a success, my students perceive that as a reason not to care much about getting a good education.

### *Key*

As you are a success, my students tend to infer from your success that they don't have to worry very much about doing well in school.





### **be aware of**

— having knowledge or realization (of , that)

### *Examples*

- We are fully aware of the gravity of the situation.
- Are you aware that you are sitting on your hat?

... but I'm not aware of any success stories: ...

### *Key*

... but I don't know any success stories





### let alone

— not to mention

### *Examples*

- I have not even read the first chapter, let alone finished the book.
- The baby can't even walk, let alone run.





**discourage** v.

— prevent (an action)

### *Examples*

- We discourage smoking in this school.
- We tried to discourage him from climbing the mountain without a guide.





But somebody handing you a book doesn't automatically foster learning.

### *Key*

**But if someone gives you a book you may not necessarily learn anything from it.**







**foster** *v.*

— help (something) to grow or develop

### *Examples*

- Cooperative learning fosters a spirit of cooperation.
- The mother tried to foster her son's interest in music by taking him to concerts when he was young.





### **try out**

— test to find out about quality, worth, effect, etc.

### *Examples*

- I want to try out several of the new singers for the part.
- The new engine must be thoroughly tried out before being out on the market.





In high school there were periods when I was highly focused on writing software, but for most of my high school years I had wide-ranging academic interests.

### *Key*

**Sometimes in high school I engaged myself wholly in writing software, but most of the time I studied a large variety of subjects.**





**highly** *adv.*

— to a great degree; very

### *Examples*

- He speaks very highly of the boy's behavior.
- It is highly improbable that they will accept our proposal.





### focus on

— direct one's attention to

### *Examples*

- Today we're going to focus on the question of homeless people in London.
- As we can't study all the resources, I propose we focus attention on one of them.
- All eyes focused on him.







**academic** *adj.*

— 1) scholarly, theoretical, not practical

— 2) of a college or university

## *Examples*

- This is the school calendar for academic year 2011 – 2012.
- He possessed no academic qualifications.





**grateful** *adj.*

— feeling or showing thanks

### *Examples*

- I was most grateful to John for bringing the books.
- We are grateful to our neighbors for help in time of trouble.





### **sign up**

— sign an agreement to take part in something

### *Examples*

- We will not have the picnic unless more people sign up.
- How many people signed up for this course?





One parent wrote me that her 15-year-old son “lost himself in the hole of the computer.”

### *Key*

One parent wrote me that her 15-year-old son became completely preoccupied by the computer and ignored everything else.





### lose oneself in

— be extremely interested in something

#### *Examples*

- On a dull winter afternoon, Harry would sit by the fire and lose himself in a book.
- She listened intently to the music, losing herself in its beauty.







... teach you first-hand about group dynamics.

### *Key*

**Group dynamics is the way in which the members of a group behave towards each other. In group activities we can observe how different people interact.**





**first-hand** *adv.*

— (learned) directly from the point of origin

### *Examples*

- I heard the news first-hand.
- This sort of experience can only be gained first-hand.





It's fine to take a deep interest in computers, dance, language or any other discipline, but not if it jeopardizes breadth.

### *Key*

**It's OK to be very strongly interested in any subject or activity such as computers, dance, or language, but not if it makes your interests too narrow.**





**discipline** *n.*

— a method of training

### *Examples*

- Learning poetry is a good discipline for the memory.
- In learning a foreign language, pronunciation drills and question and answer drills are good discipline.





**jeopardize** v.

— destroy; damage; endanger

### *Examples*

- I didn't want to jeopardize my relationship with my new friend.
- The soldier jeopardized his life to save his comrade.





If you fall into an obsessive pattern in high school, you've got two problems.

### *Key*

**If you fall into a bad habit of having strong but narrow interests in high school, you have two problems (not just one).**





### **fall into**

— pass into a specified state

### *Examples*

- You have fallen into a bad habit of repeating yourself.
- She fell into modeling almost by accident.







**unlikely** *adj.*

— not expected; improbable

### *Examples*

- The weather is unlikely to improve over the next few days.
- Victory is unlikely, but not impossible.





**capable** *adj.*

— having ability of doing or the power to do

### *Examples*

- She is extremely capable and dependable.
- This computer is capable of storing millions of bits of information.





**appropriate** *adj.*

— correct or suitable

### *Examples*

- Plain, simple clothes are appropriate for school wear.
- It seemed appropriate to end with a joke.





### **think about**

— examine, consider (especially a plan, idea to see whether it is desirable, practical, etc.)

### *Examples*

- I should like to think about your suggestion before I give a definite reply.
- I have never thought of becoming an actor.





### lead to

— have as a result; cause

### *Examples*

- A bad cold can lead to pneumonia.
- Hard work leads to success.





... unless the specialty ends up a dead end.

*Key*

**... unless there is no future for such a specialty.**





### **end up**

— finish (especially in a particular place or way)

### *Examples*

- He ended up (as) head of the firm.
- Wasteful people usually end up in debt.







Graduate school is one way to get specialized knowledge, although extended college education isn't always a good investment from a purely economic standpoint.

### *Key*

**Graduate school is one way to study a particular academic area, but it may not be the wisest way to invest your time and your tuition money.**

