

## 'Of Studies' by Francis Bacon

Dr. Shashi Bhushan : Assistant Professor (English)

**“Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested.**

**Reference to the Context:** This line has been extracted/taken/selected from the famous essay "Of Studies," written by Francis Bacon. Here, he gives us an advice on how to read. He makes a categorization according to the quality and value of the content of books.

**Explanation:** Francis Bacon in this line attempts to convey that books are to be read as per their importance in practical life. In the first category comes the books that are *“to be tasted”*. It means that these books are just worthy of a quick reading. They are to be read for fun, and delight. It is so because when we read them, we do not seek some deep knowledge - for example, reading a comic book. In the second category of the books, he puts the books that are meant *“to be swallowed”*. These books hold important knowledge that cannot be opposed - for example the laws of gravity in science. You just have to accept them the way they are. In the third category are the books that should *“be chewed and digested”*. It means that they contain philosophical ideas that should be read slowly and thoughtfully. We need to understand and imbibe them. These books raise reader's level of thought and enrich his intellect. He is able to consume more than the content of these type of books.

**Special Comments:**

1. This gives us the glimpse of Bacon's terse and aphoristic style. He skilfully says a lot in just one sentence.
2. He meticulously uses the analogy of food to convey the categorization of books.

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***“Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight, is in privateness and retiring; for ornament, is in discourse; and for ability, is in the judgment, and disposition of business.”***

**Reference to the Context:** These lines have been taken from Francis Bacon's famous essay 'Of Studies'. Like all his famous essays, this one is also full of practical wisdom. Here, he tries to convey the uses and purpose of studies in practical life. Different people study and use it for different purpose.

**Explanation:** Bacon tells us the three uses and purpose of study in practical life. Books are the source of delight, fun and entertainment when people are alone. Their study allows a man to be comfortable. It's a way to relax when one is away from the humdrum of life. Study also serves as an ornament for the people who desire to show their nice image in the eyes of others. One is able to discuss a variety of subjects in a skilful manner. It improves their language skills and enhances their character. In discourse, a learned person can convey his argument with a convincing force. The third use of the studies is in the context of business, administration, and politics. It increases one's ability to take right decisions. It helps him to handle all elements of public life. It enhances their experience, rationality, and power of judgement and these are very important in practical life.

**Special Comment:**

1. Bacon conveys his ideas in his signature aphoristic style. He skilfully says a lot in just a few lines.
2. Such lines are often used as maxims.
3. Bacon uses rhetorical technique in these lines.

## 'Of Studies' by Francis Bacon

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*“Crafty men condemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them. for they teach not their own use; but that is a wisdom without them, and above them, won by observation. Read not to contradict and confute; nor to believe and take for granted; nor to find talk and discourse; but to weigh and consider.*

**Reference to the Context:** This line has been extracted/taken/selected from the famous essay "Of Studies," written by Francis Bacon – the father of English Essay. Bacon tells how different type of men react to studies. He opines that one should stay away from the negative use of studies – like in unhealthy debates and arguments.

**Explanation:** Bacon tries to convey that men of spiteful and crafty nature hate and condemn studies. These men lack the necessary foresight to recognize the true value of studies. However, the simple men admire studies. They also show huge respect and admiration to the learned persons. But the value of the studies lies in their utility. Wise and intelligent people use the studies in their practical lives. Studies do not teach their own use. It is the role of the intellect and wisdom to learn the usage of studies. He is of the opinion that man should not read just to oppose, challenge and fight with others. The purpose should not be just winning certain debate or argument. He should solely not depend on what is written in the books. They should be read according to their value and practical usage.

**Critical Comments:**

1. The first line is often quoted as a maxim.
2. Bacon has used the aphoristic style in this passage.
3. He uses rhetorical technique to convey his ideas.

**'Of Studies' by Francis Bacon**

Dr. Shashi Bhushan : Assistant Professor (English)

***“Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man.”***

**Reference to the Context:** This line has been taken from Francis Bacon's famous essay 'Of Studies'. This essay is full of practical wisdom related to reading and its usage in life. Here, he tries to convey how the three aspects of studies – reading, writing, and discussion- play a vital role in leading a man towards perfection.

**Explanation:** According to Bacon Reading of good books gives a person knowledge - the knowledge relating to a variety of topics. Through reading, he is able to enter and explore areas which are too difficult to be explored by a common person. It expands the imaginative aspect of the mind. The reader is also able to conceive ideas that might help in the progress of the world. Thus, he is able to realize his full potential as a human being.

Conferring with others helps to remove personal narrow-mindedness and biases. It also eradicates lack of foresight in a person. Conversation with others makes one assess the possible benefits and drawbacks of a scenario. His open-minded helps him to become a man of responsibility. This mentally prepares him to lead others and be ready to face the future events.

Writing is although a creative process, but also very scientific as well. It makes one firm and meticulous. As the rules of grammar and punctuation, if not studied or followed properly to, may lead to destruction of the meaning completely. The same is also true in the case of vocabulary. Therefore, writing contribute to making people "exact" or "precise" in their actions.

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**Special Comments:**

1. The style is aphoristic. Bacon is able to convey a lot in just one sentence.
2. This quotation is often used as maxim.