

The following reading is taken from *Town's Fourth Reader*, published in the United States in 1857. *Town's* was a popular textbook in the United States in the mid-1800s, during a time when the number of public schools was increasing in the nation. As you read the text and answer the questions placed throughout it, imagine that you are a student reading *Town's* circa 1860.

Duties of Youth

By Channing

First, you are required to view and treat your parents with respect. Your tender, inexperienced age requires that you think of yourselves with humility, and conduct yourselves with modesty; that you respect the superior age and wisdom and improvements of your parents, and observe toward them a submissive deportment. Nothing is more unbecoming in you, nothing will render you more unpleasant in the eyes of others, than froward or contemptuous conduct towards your parents.

1. **humility:**
 - a. **brazenness**
 - b. **candor**
 - c. **humor**
 - d. **meekness**
2. **deportment:**
 - a. **aptitude**
 - b. **demeanor**
 - c. **emigration**
 - d. **flare**

3. **Imagine that you are a student, circa 1860, and have been assigned this reading by your teacher. How might you react to the first paragraph?**

Secondly, you should be grateful to your parents. Consider how much you owe them. The time has been, and it is not a long time past, when you depended wholly on their kindness, when you had no strength to make a single effort for yourselves, when you could neither speak nor

walk, and knew not the use of any of your powers. Had not a parent's arm supported you, you must have fallen to the earth and perished. Observe with attention the infants which you so often see, and consider that, a little while ago, you were as feeble as they are; you were only a burden and a care, and you had nothing with which you could repay your parents' affection.

4. wholly:

- a. entirely
- b. hairy
- c. glutinous
- d. more or less

5. perished:

- a. candidly described
- b. entirely submissive
- c. overtly displayed
- d. violently destroyed

6. feeble:

- a. frail
- b. incompetent
- c. narcissistic
- d. vain

But did they forsake you? How many sleepless nights have they been disturbed by your cries! When you were sick, how tenderly did they hang over you! With what pleasure have they seen you grow up in health to your present state! And what do you now possess which you have not received at their hands? God, indeed,

is your great parent, your best friend, and from Him every good gift descends; but God is pleased to bestow everything upon you, through the kindness of your parents. To your parents you owe every comfort; you owe to them the shelter you enjoy from the rain and cold, the raiment which covers, and the food which nourishes you.

7. forsake:

- a. abandon
- b. bemoan
- c. regret
- d. take

8. bestow:

- a. begin
- b. congeal
- c. give
- d. store

9. raiment:

- a. books
- b. clothing
- c. memorabilia
- d. umbrella

10. Would a reading like this be used in a public school today? Why or why not?

While you are seeking amusement, or are employed in gaining knowledge at school, your parents are toiling that you may be happy, that your wants may be supplied, that your mind may be improved, that you may grow up and be useful in the world. And when you consider how often you have forfeited all this kindness, and yet how ready they have been to forgive you, and to continue their favors, ought you not to look upon them with the tenderest gratitude?

- 11. toiling:
 - a. curling
 - b. scheduling
 - c. walking quickly
 - d. working hard

- 12. forfeited:
 - a. anonymously reported
 - b. freely given
 - c. subjected to seizure
 - d. told repeatedly

- 13. The author us implying that children reading this text have never disobeyed their parents.
 - a. True
 - b. False

What greater monster can there be than an unthankful child, whose heart is never warmed and melted by the daily expressions of parental solicitude; who, instead of requiting his best friends by his affectionate

conduct, is sullen and passionate, and thinks that his parents have done nothing for him, because they will not do all he desires? My young friends, your parents' hearts have ached enough for you already; you should strive from this time, by your expressions of gratitude and love, to requite their goodness. Do you ask how you may best express these feelings of respect and gratitude which have been enjoined? In answer, I would observe:

- 14. Based on your knowledge and personal experience, do you believe that children are more or less respectful of their parents than they were circa 1860? Explain your answer.

15. **solicitude:**
 a. concern
 b. empathy
 c. graciousness
 d. remorse

16. **requiting:**
 a. being fired
 b. quitting again
 c. repaying
 d. thanking

17. **sullen:**
 a. agnostic
 b. barbaric
 c. sarcastic
 d. sour-tempered

18. **gratitude:**
 a. hatefulness
 b. irony
 c. spite
 d. thankfulness

19. **enjoined:**
 a. broken away
 b. enchanted
 c. prescribed
 d. theorized

Thirdly, that you must make it your study to obey your parents, to do what they command, and do it cheerfully. Your own hearts will tell you that this is a most natural and proper expression of honor and love. For how often do we see children opposing their wills to the will of their parents; refusing to comply with

absolute commands; growing more obstinate, the more they are required to do what they dislike, and at last sullenly and unwillingly obeying because they can no longer refuse without exposing themselves to punishment? Consider, my young friends, that by such conduct you very much displease God, who has given you parents, that they may control your passions, and train you up in the way you should go.

20. **comply:**
 a. agree
 b. beseech
 c. multiply
 d. tempt

21. **obstinate:**
 a. grandiose
 b. morose
 c. obliging
 d. unyielding

22. **displease:**
 a. annoy
 b. create
 c. disassociate
 d. prevent

23. **In the United States today, is it commonplace for parents to “train up” their children? Explain.**

Consider how much better they can decide for you, than you can for yourselves. You know but little of the world in which you live. You hastily catch at anything which promises you pleasure; and unless the authority of a parent should restrain you, you would soon rush into ruin without a thought or a fear. In pursuing your own inclinations, your health would be destroyed, your minds would run waste, you would grow up slothful, selfish, a trouble to others, and burdensome to yourselves.

24. **hastily:**
a. punctually
b. quickly
c. stirringly
d. tempestuously
25. **restrain:**
a. digress
b. repress
c. suppress
d. transgress
26. **inclinations:**
a. agencies
b. emergencies
c. tendencies
d. urgencies
27. **slothful:**
a. crazy
b. hazy
c. lazy
d. mazy

28. **“You know but little of the _____ in which you live.”**
a. environment
b. reality
c. world

Submit, then, cheerfully, to your parents. Have you not experienced their goodness long enough to know that they wish to make you happy, even when their minds are most severe? Prove, then, your sense of their goodness, by doing cheerfully what they require. When they oppose your wishes, do not think that you have more knowledge than they. Do not receive their commands with a sour, angry, sullen look, which says, louder than words, that you obey only because you dare not rebel. If they deny your requests, do not persist in urging them; but consider how many requests they have already granted you. Consider that you have no claim upon them, and that it will be base and ungrateful for you, after all their tenderness, to murmur and complain.

29. **submit:**
a. comply
b. destroy
c. disobey
d. regret
30. **murmur:**
a. admonish
b. berate
c. endure
d. grumble

31. This text assumes that all parents are caring and operate in their children’s best interests.
- a. True
 - b. False

Fourthly, you must further express your respect, affection, and gratitude, by doing all in your power to assist and oblige your parents. Children can very soon make return for the kindness they receive. Every day, you can render your parents some little service, and often save them many cares, and sometimes not a little expense. There have been children, who in early life, have been great supports to their sick, poor and helpless parents. This is the most honorable way in which you can be employed. You must never think too highly of yourselves, to be unwilling to do anything for those who have done so much for you. You should never let your amusements take such a hold of your minds, as to make you slothful, backward and unwilling, when you are called to serve your parents.

32. According to the text, what is the most honorable way in which a child can be employed?

33. render:
- a. carve
 - b. give
 - c. make
 - d. say

34. honorable:
- a. cruel
 - b. noble
 - c. painful
 - d. untrustworthy

Fifthly, you should express your respect for your parents, and your sense of their kindness and superior wisdom, by placing unreserved confidence in them. This is a very important duty. Children should learn to be honest, sincere, and open-hearted to their parents. An artful, hypocritical child is one of the most unpromising characters in the world. You should have no secrets which you are unwilling to disclose to your parents. If you have done wrong, you should openly confess it, and ask that forgiveness which a parent’s heart is ready to bestow.

35. unreserved:
- a. full
 - b. incomplete
 - c. needy
 - d. tardy

36. According to the text, what “is one of the most unpromising characters in the world”? Do you agree? Why or why not?

Lastly, you must prove your respect and gratitude to your parents by attending seriously to their instructions and admonitions, and by improving the advantages they afford you for becoming wise, useful, good and happy forever. You must prove your gratitude to them and to God, by listening respectfully and attentively to what they say; by shunning the temptations of which they warn you, and by walking in the paths they mark out before you. You must labor to answer their hopes and wishes, by improving in knowledge; by being industrious at school; by living peaceably with your companions; by avoiding all profane and wicked language; by fleeing bad company; by treating all persons with respect; by being kind, generous, and honest; and by loving and serving your Father in Heaven.

37. **bestow:**
- a. **anchor**
 - b. **give**
 - c. **submit**
 - d. **take**

If you wish to undertake anything, ask their consent. Never begin anything in the hope that you can conceal your design. If you once strive to impose on your parents, you will be led on from one step to another, to invent falsehoods, to practice artifice, till you become contemptible and hateful. You will soon be detected, and then none will trust you.

38. **falsehoods:**
- a. **admonitions**
 - b. **bequests**
 - c. **doppelgangers**
 - d. **lies**

39. **admonitions:**
- a. **forewarnings**
 - b. **heckles**
 - c. **reminders**
 - d. **subjects**

40. **According to the text above, in order to prove their gratitude to God and to their parents, children must avoid “all profane and wicked _____.”**
- a. **artifice**
 - b. **behavior**
 - c. **friends**
 - d. **language**

My young friends, I have now set before you your duties. Let me once more beseech you to honor your father and mother. Ever cling to them with confidence and love. Be to them an honor, and ornament, a solace and a support. Be more than they expect, and if possible, be all that they desire. To you they are now looking with an affection that trembles for your safety. So live, that their eyes may ever fix on you with beams of hope and joy. So live, that the recollection of you may soothe their last hours. May you now walk by their side, in the steps of the Holy Savior; and through his grace, may you meet again in a better and happier world.

- 41. “Be more than they expect, and if _____, be all that they desire.”
 - a. forced
 - b. necessary
 - c. possible
 - d. required

- 42. “So live, that the recollection of you may _____ their last hours.”
 - a. haunt
 - b. soothe
 - c. torment
 - d. truncate

- 43. beseech:
 - a. ask
 - b. disgrace
 - c. like
 - d. recant

- 44. solace:
 - a. anger
 - b. behoove
 - c. comfort
 - d. disturb

- 45. recollection:
 - a. memento
 - b. rectitude
 - c. regret
 - d. remembrance

- 46. soothe:
 - a. calm
 - b. harm
 - c. jolt
 - d. narrate

- 47. Now that you have finished reading the entire text, again imagine that you are a student reading this circa 1860. How might you react? Compare and contrast your reactions today with your possible reactions circa 1860.

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