

Favorite Memories about School Days

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We have a wide range of memories about our days in school, covering our experiences with the physical spaces of schools, the technologies for learning (e.g., pens, pencils, paper, books, projectors, whiteboards, blackboards, videos), the clothes we wore, many classroom discussions, projects, classmates, teachers, extra-curricular activities, and more. In this workshop, we will first discuss questions about a robust range of memory categories. Then each of us will write a favorite memory, and everyone will be invited to share that memory with the group.

Some Quotations about School (source: <https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes>)

- A. “In school, you're taught a lesson and then given a test. In life, you're given a test that teaches you a lesson.”—Tom Bodett, American writer and humorist
- B. “High school is what kind of grows you into the person you are. I have great memories, good and bad, some learning experiences and some that I'll take with me the rest of my life.”—Giancarlo Stanton, American athlete
- C. “To this end, the greatest asset of a school is the personality of the teacher.”—John Strachan, Canadian clergy
- D. “What I remember most about high school are the memories I created with my friends.”—J. J. Watt, American athlete
- E. “My mother never gave up on me. I messed up in school so much they were sending me home, but my mother sent me right back.”—Denzel Washington, actor
- F. “I used to write stories. Handwriting stories in school were a big deal for me. That's kind of what I did.”—Shawn Mendes, musician
- G. “I had a terrible education. I attended a school for emotionally disturbed teachers.”—Woody Allen, comedian, actor, director
- H. “When I was a teenager, I began to settle into school because I'd discovered the extracurricular activities that interested me: music and theater.”—Morgan Freeman, actor
- I. “The two most joyous times of the year are Christmas morning and the end of school.”—Alice Cooper, musician
- J. “I never made it to the school choir because the music teacher didn't like my voice. I was pretty sad. But he was probably right; I did have a voice a bit like a goat, but my dad told me to never give up and to keep going, and it's paid off.”—Shakira, singer

Questions for Discussion and Writing

1. Which of the quotations above resonate with you? Why?
2. What are your most vivid memories about your first year in school?
3. In your first year, what was your teacher like?
4. What was the classroom like?

5. What do you remember about the building?
6. What do you remember about the playground?
7. What learning experiences stand out most from your first year of school?
8. What did you do during recess your first year in school?
9. Who were your closest school buddies in your first year?
10. What are your most vivid memories of the rest of elementary school?
11. Who was your favorite teacher in elementary school? Why?
12. What was it like to make the transition from elementary school to middle school or junior high school?
13. What are you most vivid memories of middle school or junior high school?
14. Who was your favorite teacher in middle school or junior high school? Why?
15. What was your favorite subject in middle or junior high school? Why?
16. What was it like to make the transition to high school?
17. What was your favorite subject in high school? Why?
18. Who was your favorite teacher in high school? Why?
19. If you participated in sports what was that like?
20. If you have attended any school reunions, what have they been like?
21. What classmates, if any, do you stay in touch with?
22. If you attended college, what are your most vivid memories of that experience?
23. Overall, what role has formal education played in your life?
24. Do you have a favorite book or movie that focuses on school? What do you like about it?
25. If you are/were a teacher, tell us about that experience.

Some Resources

Apps, Jerry. *One-Room Country Schools: History and Recollections*. Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 1996.

Christenson, Howard B. *Cloverdale: A Salute to One-Room School Teachers*. Apollo Books, 1986.