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Not A Day Without A Dictionary

By Hallidae Thomason

There are many small ways to make your days a little more full and to take every opportunity for

learning. As a teacher, I am passionate about seeing people grasp what a privilege and a blessing that learning is. If you are blessed enough to live in a place that allows or better yet encourages you to further your education, then I believe that it is right and good of you to do that. There are many, many ways for you to take learning seriously, but one of the easiest and best ways is to grab a dictionary.

There are many things I love about a good dictionary. Being an English professor, the connection is obvious. I love words. I love the power of language for communication. I think it is quite amazing that two people that have never met can sit down and have a conversation and basically understand everything that is being said because they speak the same language. While it is very true that you can speak a language and even learn new words without using a dictionary, think of all there is to learn by using a dictionary.

I gave myself a challenge a few years ago when it came time to make a New Year's resolution. Typically, my resolutions had consisted of plans to eat better and workout more, but that year I decided that I would buy a new dictionary and spend a few minutes each day reading it. Sound boring? If so, then you obviously haven't tried reading from a dictionary. It is actually one of the best decisions I have ever made. I looked forward to my few minutes in the dictionary so much that I began reading it both morning and night. Reading my dictionary daily was by far the easiest resolution to follow.

What I love about reading the dictionary is learning how much I do not know. All I have to do is flip open a page and I am confronted with how much more there is to learn, not just about my language, but about all of life. I read words that I have never heard of and I learn concepts that I didn't even know existed. Reading my dictionary is one of the most humbling and yet thrilling things I've ever done.

So, grab a dictionary. Start the process of learning new words to add to your understanding and vocabulary, but also let your time in a dictionary teach you new and exciting things about the world.

Hallidae Thomason is an English professor who encourages all of her students to read a dictionary daily, even if just a few new words. See

<http://www.dictionarystimes.info>

for more on this great habit.

A Latin Dictionary Saved My Life

By Martin Stoleman

In many ways, I have never been much of a student, especially if you are talking about being a student within the confines of a classroom. I've always loved learning, don't get me wrong, but get me inside a classroom for months on end and there is little that can be done to keep me interested in even the most fascinating subjects. I have no real idea how I managed to make it through four years of college. My Latin class in particular almost had the power to ruin my college career. I am convinced that I might have quite school had it not been for my Latin dictionary. It saved my education, and hence, my life.

I realize the previous statement may sound extreme, but it is true. I was so fed up with the stresses of my Latin class in college that I nearly dropped out of school. I guess I didn't have things in the best perspective, but that is how deeply I was being affected by the class. In the sixth week of the fifteen week class I called my father on the phone and finally told him of the truth of my current plight. He simply listened and then laughed at me and muttered two words. "Latin dictionary," he said. I had no idea how much I needed to hear those two words nor how much they would change my semester and literally the rest of my life.

I have absolutely no idea why my Latin professor didn't suggest that I buy a Latin dictionary. I'm actually a little bitter about it now that I think about it. Anyway, I rushed off to a bookstore the next day and purchased the cheapest and biggest Latin dictionary I could find. I had little money, but I felt like bigger must be better when it came to a dictionary.

Over the days and weeks ahead, I poured over that dictionary as I studied for my Latin class. Having that resource taught me an amazing amount that I just wasn't getting in the classroom. I pulled my grade up from a failing score to a B in the remaining weeks of the class. But that's not all that happened: I had a renewed love of learning. Yes, the Latin dictionary was responsible for my pursuit of learning and of new knowledge in many areas. It did little to make me enjoy time in a classroom, but it did inspire me to pursue many of the things I now love.

Martin Stoleman is a writer that credits his college diploma and many other things to his Latin dictionary. See

<http://www.funlatindictionary.info>

to learn more for yourself.



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