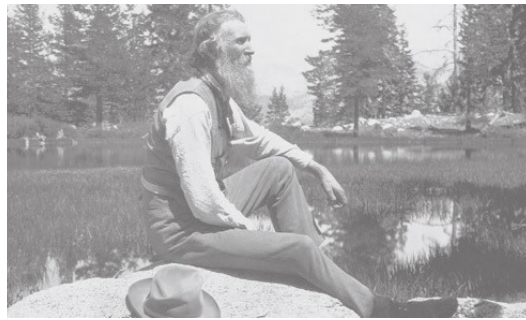


Don't be scared to walk alone.
Don't be scared to like it.
-John Muir



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Walking Alone...



This past month I hiked on the Appalachian Trail with my mother and two other friends. I packed my McGregor backpack and set out for just a hike. No destination, just a hike through the northern part of the trail in Pennsylvania. I visualized myself as a turtle. No joke, a turtle carries his home on his back. Wandering can be terrifying. Why? This question has been carried by men much smarter than I, but I can speak to the experience alone. The measured world dissolves and the mind traverses the paths within.

As an avid reader, as well as a writer, I have found such immeasurable grace in walking. Reading as much as I do, I often find myself in what I have coined “reader’s block.” My mind expands to places where it is difficult to breathe. When my mind finds a tension, only a walk can resolve the riddle. Writer’s block is all too familiar. Yet, again, walking until it relents is the only way back to well-being. Somehow the tensions unravel in the art of walking.

One of my heroes, Friedrich Nietzsche, taught me the value of walking, as I was learning it existentially. He has two quotes that have proved invaluable guidance to me along the path of life: “All truly great thoughts are conceived by walking” and “Never trust a thought you have had while you weren’t walking.” Sometimes it’s the simple thoughts that are the best advice. I have furthered his epistemology of thought to include reading and writing.

Literacy is just that, reading and writing, and supposedly arithmetic. I have placed a question-mark on the importance of arithmetic. Reading, writing, and walking are the three virtues of the intellect. Walking alone is the key to reading and writing not taught in any university in the world. The art of walking is the foundation of *Learn: A Project*. Kierkegaard said, “Above all, do not lose your desire to walk. Everyday, I walk myself into a state of well-being and walk away from every illness. I have walked myself into my best thoughts, and I know of no thought so burdensome that one cannot walk away from it. But by sitting still, and the more one sits still, the closer one comes to feeling ill. Thus, if one just keeps on walking, everything will be all right.”

Reader and writer’s block have many of us ill. We have somehow concluded that debate is more important than study and even the literate often do not write. Our opinions have been confused as truth. Truth eludes us, hidden somewhere in the woods, somewhere along a sidewalk. One must always remember to walk, the terrors of the mind cease, and the eyes are washed clean. Read, write, and walk...

The Puzzles of Sherlock Holmes



Project Learn, at the Fulton County Public Library, is presenting an evening with Sherlock Holmes, rather, you and your team must do your best to become Sherlock Holmes. On Wednesday, October 25th, at 6pm you are invited to an evening of puzzling mystery. The evening is literacy's annual fundraiser, formerly *The Spell Bowl* and *A Joker's Ball*. The entrance fee is \$50 per team with a limit of 5 per team.

What to expect? Well, I guess that is part of the puzzling mystery. Your only metric is to expect that you must incarnate your inner Sherlock Holmes to unravel and deduce who, what, when, where, why, and how. "Never trust to general impressions," echoes Sherlock, "but concentrate upon the details, my friends." This maxim will prove enough of a metric for you to come out and enjoy yourselves and put together the jig-saw puzzle.

Teacher's Credit Union has generously sponsored Jarrety's Place and there is a Holmesian prize for the winning team. The funds raised for the event will be used to further various *Learn* projects such as *Study, Read, Write, and Friend*, as well as *The Early Reader's Plus* program founded by Gordon Bohs. The program donates new books purchased wholesale to various organizations in Fulton County to encourage family's to read with their children.

Teaching Grammar in Context



More than thirty-eight years ago Constance Weaver's *Grammar for Teachers* (NCTE, 1979) broke new ground by responding to a widespread concern, still applicable today, as to the place and pedagogy of grammar in school curriculums. Weaver's original argument was simply that teaching rules for students to remember is rhetorical and an ineffective way of teaching grammar. She polemicized that students should simply be encouraged to write, even if wrong, and work alongside their sentence structure, however "incorrect," and explain the grammar in context. This method proves an invaluable pedagogy and a revolutionary approach to language arts.

Weaver, the Heckert Professor of Reading and Writing at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, and Professor Emerita of English at Western Michigan University, is an advocate for a whole language approach to literacy and learning. This approach is built alongside Noam Chomsky's theories that the mind is wired for language and phonics is an error in posturing. Though the whole language approach is controversial, it has proved dynamic.

In her work *Teaching Grammar in Context*, Weaver extends her philosophy by presenting an ulterior method, as well as practical ideas, for teaching grammar, not as an isolated discipline, but rather alongside writing; two sides, one coin, or currency. She cites decades of research that suggest that grammar taught in isolation has little, if any, effect on most students' writing.

"Good readers, make good writers, make good speakers," is the algorithm for her approach to language arts. The key is that it must be done in that order and in proportion. The mind, many new theorists argue, "absorbs grammar" subconsciously the more one reads, without any instruction at all. Grammar is, at the most basic level, simply coherence, yet it has become an end unto itself. Here is where many modern pedagogists placed a question-mark where there once was a period.