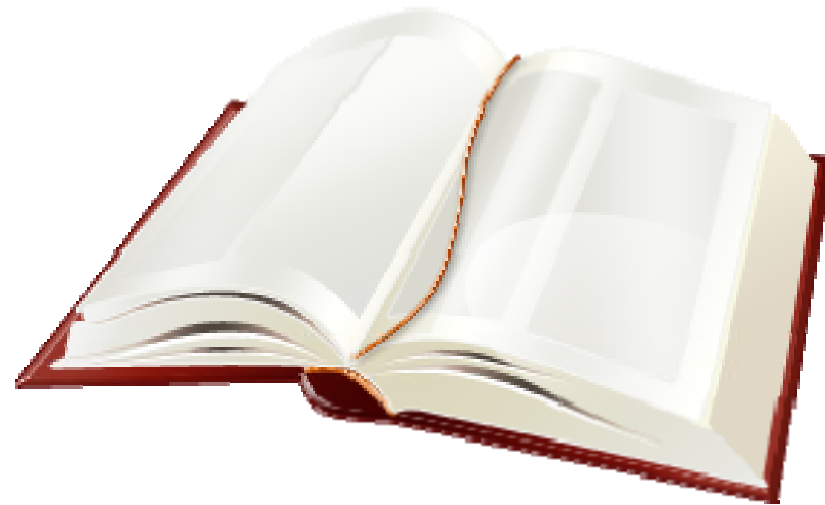
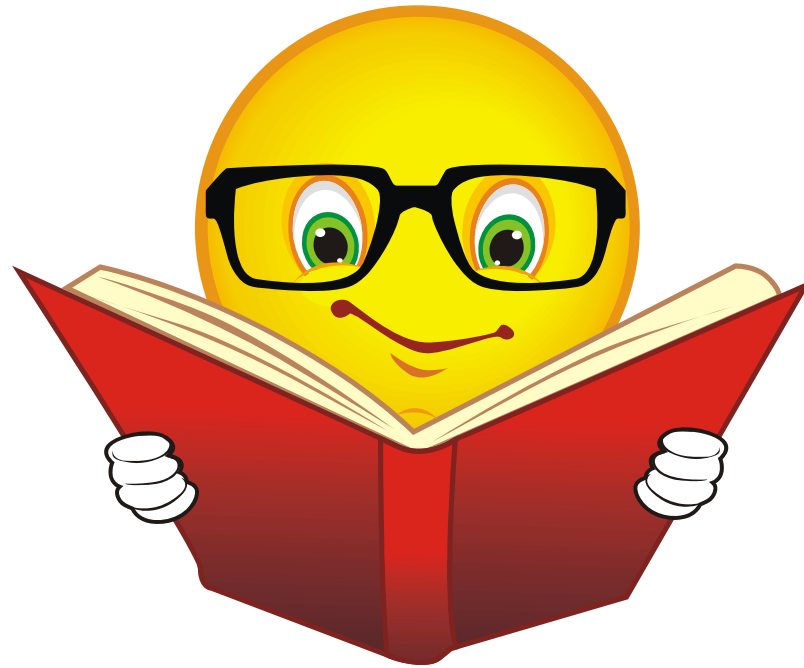


BEST PRACTICES IN EDUCATION – 2000 YEARS AGO!



***“The world exists only by virtue of the breath coming from the mouths of school children engaged in their studies.”
(B. Shabbat 119b)***

LESSONS FOR STUDENTS



1. Study with a buddy

“Rabbi Hama ben Hanina said, ‘What is the meaning of the saying, “Iron sharpens iron? (Proverbs 27:17)” This is to teach you that just as in the case of one iron implement sharpening another, so also do two students sharpen each other’s mind.’” (B. Ta’anith 7a)

2. Set aside fixed times for study

“That brings forth its fruit in its season and whose leaf doth not wither (Psalm 1:3)’ — was explained by Raba as follows, ‘If he brings forth his fruit in its season (studies at fixed times), then his leaf will not wither (he will remember what he has learned).’”

(B. Avodah Zarah 19b)

3. Don't cram; learn a little each day

“Raba expounded in the name of Rabbi Sehora who had it from Rav Huna, ‘What is the meaning of the text, “Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished, but he that gathers little by little shall increase (Proverbs 13:11)?” If a man studies much at a time his learning decreases, but if he does not do so but instead “gathers little by little” his learning shall increase.’” (B. Eirubin 54b)

4. Don't skip class

“Rav Judah said in Rav's name, ‘One should never abstain from attendance at the House of Study even for a single hour, for lo, how many years was a particular passage taught in the House of Study without its reason being revealed, until Rabbi Hanina ben Akiba came and elucidated it?’” (B. Shabbat 83b)

5. Listen when your teacher is speaking

*“When scholars disseminate the Torah, you should modestly stay in the background so as not to compete with them.”
(B. Berachoth 63a)*

6. Engage in repetition and review of your lessons

“He that repeats his studies a hundred times is not to be compared with him who repeats his studies a hundred and one times.” (B. Chagiagah 9b)

“If you will listen to the old, you will be able to listen to the new, but “if your heart turns away (Deuteronomy 30:17),” you will no more listen .” (B. Sukkah 49b)

*“Ben Bag Bag said, ‘Turn it over and over again.’”
(Pirkei Avot 5:22)*

7. Study even if you don't fully understand

“A man should study even if he doesn't fully understand, and understanding will come later.” (B. Shabbat 63a)

*“This, too, did Raba say, ‘Let one by all means learn, even though he is liable to forget, yea, even if he does not fully understand all the words which he studies. As it is said, “My soul breaks for the longing that it has for Your ordinances at all times. (Psalm 119:20)”’”
(B. Avodah Zarah 19a)*

נעשה ונשמע (Exodus 24:7)

“We will do, and we will understand.”

8. Use mnemonics when necessary

“Rabbi Hisda stated, ‘The Torah can only be acquired with the aid of mnemonic signs, for it is said, “Put it in their mouths.”’ (‘Now therefore write this poem for you, and teach it to the people of Israel. Put it in their mouths, that this poem may be a witness for me against the people of Israel (Deuteronomy 31:19).’)”
(B. Eirubin 54b)

9. Involve your whole being in the learning process

“Beruriah once discovered a student who was learning in an undertone (a subdued utterance). Rebuking him she exclaimed, Is it not written, “Ordered in all things and sure? (II Samuel 23:5)” If it is “ordered” in your two hundred and forty-eight limbs, it will be “sure.” Otherwise it will not be sure.” (B. Eirubin 54a)

10. Learn from your teachers even if they are not perfect

*“When asked how he could learn Torah from a heretic such as Acher, Rabbi Meir replied that when he finds a juicy pomegranate he eats the fruit and throws away the peel.”
(B. Chagigah 15b)*

11. To master a subject, first learn the basics from one teacher, and then learn from several teachers

“And he shall be like a tree transplanted by streams of water (Psalm 1:3)’ — Those of the school of Rabbi Jannai said ‘a tree transplanted,’ not ‘a tree planted,’ which implies that whoever learns Torah from one master only will never achieve great success. Said Rabbi Hisda to the rabbinic students, ‘I have a mind to tell you something, though I fear that you might leave me and go elsewhere. Whoever learns Torah from one master only will never achieve great success.’ They did leave him and went to sit before Rabbah, who, however, explained to them that the maxim only applies to lessons in logical deductions. But as to oral traditions, it is better to learn from one master only so that one is not confused by the variations in the terms used.” (B. Avodah Zarah 19a-19b)

12. Respect your peers and teachers

“Rabbi Eleazar ben Shammua said, ‘Let the honor of your student be as dear to you as your own, and the honor of your colleague as the reverence you have for your teacher, and the reverence for your teacher as your awe of Heaven.’”

(Pirkei Avot 4:12)

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“Rabbi Johanan said, ‘You are sneering at the words of the Sages!’ Rabbi Johanan then set his eyes on him and the student turned into a heap of bones.” (B. Baba Bathra 75a)

13. Study what you have a passion for

“A man can learn well only that part of the Torah which is his heart's desire, for it is said, ‘But whose delight is in the law of the Lord (Psalm 1:2).’” (B. Avodah Zarah 19a)

14. Old scholars still deserve respect

“Which thou didst break, and thou shalt put them in the ark.’ Rabbi Joseph said, ‘This teaches us that both the second set of tablets and the fragments of the original tablets were deposited in the ark. Hence we learn that a scholar who has forgotten his learning through no fault of his must not be treated with disrespect.’”
(B. Menachoth 99a)

15. Take good care of your brain

“When wine goes in, secrets come out.” (B. Sanhedrin 38a)

“Intelligence imparts fragrance and relish to a man's words. When the wine goes in intelligence takes its leave. Wherever there is wine, there is no intelligence.” (Numbers Rabbah X:8)

LESSONS FOR TEACHERS



1. Those who can, teach

“Rabbi Johanan further said, ‘One who studies but does not teach it is like a flower in the desert whose fragrance is wasted.’” (B. Rosh HaShanah 23a)

2. We learn from our students

“Rabbi Hanina said, ‘I have learned much from my teachers, more from my colleagues, but from my students I have learned the most of all.’” (B. Ta'anith 7a)

3. There are boundaries that must be respected by both students and teachers

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NOTE: The type of baths being discussed here are the old Roman baths that were a source of health and hygiene in the ancient world. Today one might say that one should not go to a pool party with a student or maybe even be friends in the less formal settings of social media.

4. Use good students to help poor students

“The attentive one will read on his own, and if one is inattentive, put him next to a diligent one.” (B. Baba Bartha 21a)

5. Act and dress appropriately

“Rabbi Hiyya ben Abba said in Rabbi Johanan's name, ‘It is a disgrace for a scholar to go out with patched shoes into the market place.’” (B. Shabbat 114a)

“Rabbi Hiyya ben Abba also said in Rabbi Johanan's name, ‘Any scholar upon whose garment a grease stain is found is worthy of death.’” (B. Shabbat 114a)

6. Don't embarrass your students (or anyone!) in public

“A tanna recited before Rabbi Nahman ben Isaac, ‘He who publicly shames his neighbor is as though he shed blood,’ whereupon he remarked to him, ‘You say well, because I have seen such shaming, the ruddiness departing and paleness supervening.’”

(B. Baba Metzia 58b)

7. There's an optimum class size

“Raba further said, ‘The number of pupils to be assigned to each teacher is twenty-five. If there are fifty, we appoint two teachers. If there are forty, we appoint an assistant at the expense of the town.’” (B. Baba Bartha 21a)

8. Challenge your students

“It was taught that Rabbi Akiba said, 'It was not Rabbi Ishmael who laid down this ruling but that disciple, and the halachah (law) is in agreement with that disciple.' Is not this self-contradictory? You first said, 'It was not Rabbi Ishmael who laid down this ruling,' from which it is obvious that the law is not in agreement with his view, and then you say, 'The law is in agreement with that disciple which implies that it is also in agreement with his teacher, Rabbi Ishmael.' Rab Judah replied in the name of Samuel, ‘ Rabbi Akiba made that statement for the sole purpose of exercising the wits of the students.’”

(B. Eirubin 13a)

9. Don't water down your subject matter

“Rav Judah said in Rav's name, ‘Whoever fails to teach a point of law to his student is as though he had robbed him of his ancestral heritage, as it is written, “Moses commanded us a law, even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob (Deuteronomy 33:4).” It is an inheritance destined for all Israel.’” (B. Sanhedrin 91a)

10. There are different types of students

“There are four types of character among those who sit before the sages. They are typified by a sponge, a funnel, a strainer, and a sieve. A sponge absorbs all, a funnel lets in at one end and lets out at the other, a strainer lets out the wine but retains the sediment, and a sieve lets out the coarse meal but retains the choice flour.” (Pirkei Avot 5:15)

11. Restrain yourself when disciplining students

“When you wish to punish a student, hit him with nothing harder than a shoelace.” (B. Baba Bartha 21a)

12. Respect your colleagues

“Rabbi Jeremiah said in the name of Rabbi Simeon ben Lakish, ‘When two scholars are amiable to each other in their discussions in halachah (law), the Holy One, blessed be He, gives heed to them.’” (B. Shabbat 63a)

13. College still isn't for everyone

“If a student does not see a sign of blessing (i.e. progress) in his studies after five years, he never will.” (B. Chullin 24a)

14. Be a fountain of knowledge

*“Rabbi Tanhuma said, ‘Just as the spice-maker's chest (migdaloth) is full of all manner of spices, so a scholar should be full of Scripture, Mishnah, Talmud, halachoth (law) and haggadoth (parables).’”
(Song of Songs Rabbah V:18)*

15. We forget so that we can engage in lifelong learning

“Rabbi Isaac said, ‘It is for man’s good that he learns Torah and forgets it, because if a man studied Torah and never forgot it, he would occupy himself with learning it for two or three years and then resume his ordinary work and never pay further attention to it. But since a man studies Torah and forgets it, he will not entirely abandon its study.’” (Ecclesiastes Rabbah I:32)



The End

The image features the text "The End" in a cursive script, centered within a light blue oval. The text is rendered in a purple-to-pink gradient. Above and below the oval are decorative flourishes consisting of symmetrical, ornate scrollwork in shades of purple and blue.