

Document 1

Plutarch (46-120 CE) was a Greek writer who lived during a time when the Roman Empire ruled Greece. He wrote many works about Ancient Greece including the excerpt below about the Spartans. In the excerpt, Plutarch describes how Spartan boys were raised. He used ancient Greek sources to write this text since he lived after the time period he describes.

They learned to read and write for purely practical reasons; but all other forms of education they banned from the country...All their education was directed toward prompt obedience to authority, stout endurance of hardship, and victory or death in battle.

They always went without a shirt, receiving one garment for the entire year, and with unwashed bodies, refraining almost completely from bathing and rubbing down.

The young men slept...upon pallets which they themselves brought together by breaking off by hand, without any implement, the tops of the reeds which grew on the banks of the Eurotas...

It was the custom that the younger men should be questioned by the elder as to where they were going and for what, and also that the elder should rebuke [scold] the one who did not answer or tried to contrive plausible [make up] reasons....

The boys steal whatever they can of their food, learning to make their raids adroitly [cleverly] upon people who are asleep or are careless in watching. The penalty for getting caught is a beating and no food. [T]he dinner allowed them is meagre [small] ...they may be compelled to be daring and unscrupulous [dishonest, in this case, by stealing].

This was the object of the starvation diet. It was meagre both for the reasons given and purposely that the youth should never become accustomed to being sated [satisfied], but to being able to go without food; For in this way, the Spartans thought, the youth would be more serviceable in war if they were able to carry on without food...And to put up with the plainest diet, so as to be able to consume anything that came to hand, they thought made the youths' bodies more healthy...and they believed that this practice caused the bodies to [be thick and strong], to grow tall...

Source: Instituta Laconica by Plutarch, as published in Vol. III of the Loeb Classical Library edition, 1931 and posted [here](#) is in the public domain.

Civil Service Examinations



Candidates take the Palace Examination during the Song Dynasty.

[Image](#) is courtesy of Wikimedia Commons and is public domain.

During the Ming and Qing dynasties, the civil service examination system was based upon the Confucian classics and was the driving force behind the school curriculum that was followed all over China. The opening lessons in the curriculum that gave these children basic literacy were the Confucian classics and other approved texts. The Confucian lessons and texts that young boys learned in school were very important for their success later on because those lessons were the basis for the exams they would take later in life.

The civil service examination system was an important vehicle of social mobility in Ming and Qing China. Even a youth from the poorest family could join the ranks of the educated elite by succeeding in the examination system. This hope for success in the examinations dependent only on one's ability rather than one's social position helped circulate the key ideas of Confucianism -- concerning proper behavior, rituals, relationships, etc. -- through all levels of Chinese society. The hope of social mobility through success in this system was the motivation for going to school in the first place, whether one was the son of a scholar or a farmer. But even for the farmer's son who did not do well enough to take the exams even at the lowest level, going to school had the major payoff of working literacy, and this literacy was acquired through mastery of the same basic texts that others who went on to pass the examinations at the highest level also studied. In accordance with Confucian principles, girls were not educated or allowed to take the civil service examinations.

Document 3

Excerpts from the writings of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, an Austrian diplomat who was an ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, in which he discusses the differences between Ottoman and European education and reward systems.

Excerpt A:

“I have envied the Turks this system of theirs. It is always the way of the Turks, whenever they come into possession of a man of uncommonly good parts, to rejoice and be exceedingly glad, as though they had found a pearl of great price. And, in bringing out all there is in him, they leave nothing undone that labor and thought can do—especially where they recognize military aptitude [skill].

Our Western way is different indeed! In the West, if we come into possession of a good dog or hawk or horse, we are delighted, and we spare nothing in our efforts to bring the creature to the highest perfection of which its kind is capable. In the case of a man, however—supposing that we happen to come upon a man of signal [significant] endowments [talents]—we do not take anything like the same pains, and we do not consider that his education is particularly our business. So we Westerners obtain many sorts of pleasure and service from a well-broken-in horse, dog and hawk, while the Turks obtain from a man whose character has been cultivated by education the vastly greater return that is afforded by the vast superiority and pre-eminence of human nature over the rest of the animal kingdom.”

Excerpt B:

“No distinction is attached to birth among the Turks; the deference to be paid to a man is measured by the position he holds in the public service. [...] In making his appointments the Sultan [does not take] into consideration recommendations or popularity. [H]e considers each case on its own merits, and examines carefully into the character [and] ability of the man [...] Among the Turks, therefore, honours, high posts, and judgeships are the rewards of great ability and good service. If a man be dishonest, or lazy, or careless, he remains at the bottom of the ladder, an object of contempt; for such qualities there are no honours in Turkey!

This is the reason that they are successful in their undertakings, that they lord it over others, and are daily extending the bounds of their empire. These are not our [European] ideas, with us there is no opening left for merit; birth is the standard for everything.”

Source: C. T. Forster and F. H. B. Daniel, eds., *The Life and Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, vol. I* (London: Kegan Paul, 1881), pp, 86-88, 153-155, 219-222, 287-290, 293.
(<http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1555busbecq.asp>)

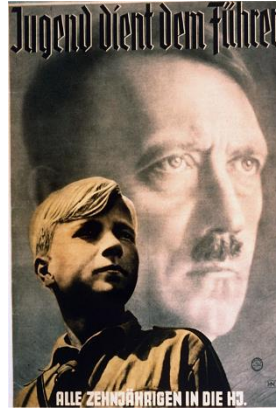
Document 4

The Hitler Youth

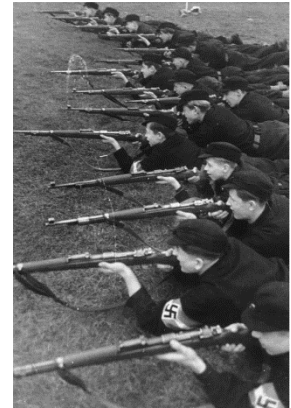
In the 1930s and 1940s, Germany was ruled by a party called the Nazis who were led by a man named Adolf Hitler. The Nazis believed in a racist ideology that stated that Aryan people who were white and had blond hair and blue eyes, were the master race and that other groups, especially Jewish people were the enemies of the Germany state and should be eliminated from society.



Hitler Youth performing the Nazi salute at a rally in Berlin, 1933



Poster: "Youth Serves the Leader: All 10-Year-Olds into the [Hitler Youth]"



Hitler Youth at rifle practice, circa 1943

One tactic that the Nazis used to achieve their goals is called indoctrination. Indoctrination is the process of teaching a person or group of people to accept a set of beliefs. To indoctrinate young people in Germany, the Nazis changed what students learned in school, used images to communicate their ideas to children, and created organizations like the Hitler Youth.

The Hitler Youth was an organization for teenagers similar to the Boys and Girl Scouts in the United States, but their aim was to teach children to hate Germany's enemies, devote themselves to Hitler and the Nazis, and learn skills that would be useful for going to war.

Document 5

Today, the topics students learn about in their social studies classes is usually determined by the government under which they live. In the United Kingdom, the Department of Education publishes advice for schools and teachers "on promoting basic important British values" for students. The excerpt below is from the introduction to that document.

All maintained [public] schools must meet the requirements set out in section 78 of the Education Act 2002 and promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of their pupils. Through ensuring pupils' SMSC development, schools can also demonstrate they are actively promoting fundamental British values...

Pupils must be encouraged to regard people of all faiths, races and cultures with respect and tolerance.

It is expected that pupils should understand that while different people may hold different views about what is 'right' and 'wrong', all people living in England are subject to its law. The school's ethos and teaching, which schools should make parents aware of, should support the rule of English civil and criminal law and schools should not teach anything that undermines it. If schools teach about religious law, particular care should be taken to explore the relationship between state and religious law. Pupils should be made aware of the difference between the law of the land and religious law.