

Thomas Jefferson Quotations on Education

“Quotations on Education.” *Thomas Jefferson Encyclopedia, Thomas Jefferson Foundation.*
<http://www.monticello.org/site/jefferson/quotations-education> (accessed July 31, 2014).

- 1782** "Every government degenerates when trusted to the rulers of the people alone. The people themselves, therefore, are its only safe depositories. And to render them safe, their minds must be improved to a certain degree."
- 1786** "I think by far the most important bill in our whole code is that for the diffusion of knowledge among the people. No other sure foundation can be devised, for the preservation of freedom and happiness...Preach, my dear Sir, a crusade against ignorance; establish & improve the law for educating the common people. Let our countrymen know that the people alone can protect us against these evils [tyranny, oppression, etc.] and that the tax which will be paid for this purpose is not more than the thousandth part of what will be paid to kings, priests and nobles who will rise up among us if we leave the people in ignorance."
- 1789** "...wherever the people are well informed they can be trusted with their own government..."
- 1816** "if a nation expects to be ignorant & free, in a state of civilisation, it expects what never was & never will be."
- 1816** "Enlighten the people generally, and tyranny and oppressions of body and mind will vanish like evil spirits at the dawn of day"
- 1818** "A system of general instruction, which shall reach every description of our citizens from the richest to the poorest, as it was the earliest, so will it be the latest, of all the public concerns in which I shall permit myself to take an interest."
- 1818** "The objects of this primary eduction determine its character and limits. These objects are To give to every citizen the information he needs for the transaction of his own business; To enable him to calculate for himself, and to express and preserve his ideas, his contracts and accounts, in writing; To improve by reading, his morals and faculties; To understand his duties to his neighbors and country, and to discharge with competence the functions confided to him by either; To know his rights; to exercise with order and justice those he retains"
- 1820** "I know no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society, but the people themselves: and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their controul with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is, not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education. this is the true corrective of abuses of constitutional power."
- 1824** "The qualifications for self-government in society are not innate. They are the result of habit and long training."