

**“What They Learn in School”**  
**by Jerome Stern**

**On a separate sheet of paper**, answer the following questions about the monologue with complete, thoughtful, well-supported responses.

1. List all the things schools want students to know.
2. List the things schools don't want students to know.
3. How do schools try to get kids to avoid drugs?
4. How do schools try to get kids to avoid sex?
5. What is the logical inconsistency between these two methods?
6. Is either method effective? Why or why not? Which is better? Support your response with evidence.
7. Should schools teach morality? Why or why not?
8. *Do* schools teach morality? Explain and give examples?
9. List examples of competition in schools.
10. List examples of conformity in schools.
11. Which is a more effective method of education? Why?
12. Some people believe books can corrupt young minds? Do you agree? Why or why not?
13. What about music? Television? Movies? Internet? Explain your responses.
14. According to the monologue, why do people need to learn to think for themselves? Is this a good reason? Why or why not? Are there better reasons to do your own thinking? If so, what are they?
15. Does knowing about art make someone weird? (Please leave Mrs. Loureiro out of this.) Why are schools afraid of art?
16. Read the last stanza carefully. Why do schools want to teach kids “not to question, not to challenge, not to imagine”? Can you think of examples of this in your own schooling? Do tell.
17. Why is it so important to “be obedient and behave well”? Are you? Do you? Why?
18. Schools are supposed to teach people to be responsible for themselves, but according to the monologue, what are schools actually doing? Do you think it's true? Why or why not?
19. In your opinion, which parts of this monologue are the most truthful and effective? Why?
20. Is there anything about this monologue that makes you uncomfortable? If so, which parts? Why?
21. In your opinion, how are schools succeeding? How are they failing?
22. What is the tone (voice) of this monologue?
23. What is the purpose of this monologue? Does it achieve the purpose?
24. Does your brain ache from all this *thinking*? (Good!)
25. Do you think your own experience in school is like the monologue suggests, or do you believe the writer is describing someone else? Explain.