# A Valuable Lesson

Parents often try to teach their children lessons by saying things such as “Don’t cross the street before looking both ways,” “Wash your hands before eating,” “Eat your vegetables,” and “Don’t talk to strangers.” If you have children, what sayings like these do you tell your children? If you do not have children, what did your parents say to you to try to teach you life lessons?

## Listening

*Source:* [*http://thisibelieve.org/essay/11875/*](http://thisibelieve.org/essay/11875/)

Directions: Listen to the speaker talk about her life lesson and write short answers to the questions.

1. When did she have this life-changing experience?
2. What was the name of the man she met?
3. Where did they meet?
4. What were his life circumstances at the time they first met?
5. What happened to the man after the woman and he had known each other for a while?
6. Who called the woman one day and why?
7. What was the lesson she learned?
8. What are the results in her life now?

Write a paragraph about a **valuable lesson** in your lifeor something important someone else you know has learned from a life lesson or a time when you taught someone else a significant life lesson.

Include:

* + **A title and good format** (indented first line, centered title, double spaced)
	+ **A topic sentence** that tells the reader your main idea and grabs the attention of the reader (a hook) – this can be a saying, proverb, idiom, or famous quote (either in English or translated from another language) that relates to your story or the lesson learned
	+ **Details** that tell what happened in time order
	+ **A conclusion** that tells:
		- what you learned (the lesson)
		- OR what advice you have for other people in the same situation
		- OR how you feel about the situation now, looking back
		- OR how the event changed you or your life or how you have grown
		- OR what you will do in the future if something similar happens again

For your **topic sentence**, you could use a proverb, famous saying, or idiom related to the topic. You may also choose to use one of these as the **conclusion**.

Here are some links to find quotes and proverbs:

<http://homepage.smc.edu/reading_lab/american_english_proverbs.htm>

<http://www.phrasemix.com/collections/the-50-most-important-english-proverbs>

<http://www.citehr.com/32222-1000-english-proverbs-sayings-love-blind.html>

<http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/life> (site may be blocked at adult schools)

<http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/life-lessons> (site may be blocked at adult schools)

Look at these topic sentences. Remember that a good topic sentence should 1) give the reader an idea about the topic and 2) be interesting. Are these topic sentences effective? Why or why not? What changes would you suggest?

1. I learned a valuable lesson once.
2. Two years ago I lost my job and found myself unable to pay my rent. I ended up living in a homeless shelter. Most people would consider this situation to be very sad or even horrible, but for me it was an invaluable life experience, for I learned the true meaning of the word "generosity."
3. When I lost my dad to cancer, I learned a lot.
4. During my first year of living in the United States, I experienced many difficult challenges: learning a new language, getting accustomed to a different culture, trying to find a job, even passing my driving test. However, through it all I learned that you should never give up your life's dream no matter how distant it seems.
5. Learning English is interesting, but it truly is a hard language to learn. My teacher helps me every day.
6. The famous American author Ralph Waldo Emerson once wrote, "Life is a succession of lessons which must be lived to be understood." For me, this quote has been true throughout my life. I have had many difficult experiences, but I have learned something important from all of them. The most valuable lesson I ever learned was the need to stay positive when everyday life troubles seem too much to bear. I learned this lesson several years ago when there was a tragedy in my family back home, and I could not do anything to help because I was very far away, here in the U.S.A.
7. There is a saying in English, “When life hands you a bowl of lemons, make lemonade,” and I learned that this is true: When you have a positive attitude, you can change even the worst situation in your life.

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## Details to include:

1. What is a valuable lesson you have learned?
2. Who was responsible for this learning experience?
3. How or why has this lesson helped you or changed you?
4. When did your experience happen?
5. Where did the event happen?
6. Who were you with?
7. What happened?
8. What did you learn? Why was this a valuable lesson?
9. What advice do you have for other people in the same situation?
10. How do you feel now about the event? How did the event change you or your life?
11. What will you do in the future is this ever happens again?