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The American Boy

No boy can afford to neglect his work, and with a boy work, as a rule, means study. Of course there are occasionally brilliant successes in life where the man has been worthless as a student when a boy. To take these exceptions as examples would be as unsafe as it would be to advocate blindness because some blind men have won undying honor by triumphing over their physical infirmity and accomplishing great results in the world. I am no advocate of senseless and excessive cramming in studies, but a boy should work, and should work hard, at his lessons—in the first place, for the sake of what he will learn, and in the next place, for the sake of the effect upon his own character of resolutely settling down to learn it. Shiftlessness, slackness, indifference in studying, are almost certain to mean inability to get on in other walks of life. Of course, as a boy grows older it is a good thing if he can shape his studies in the direction toward which he has a natural bent; but whether he can do this or not, he must put his whole heart into them. I do not believe in mischief-doing in school hours, or in the kind of animal spirits that results in making bad scholars; and I believe that those boys who take part in rough, hard play outside of school will not find any need for horse-play in school. While they study they should study just as hard as they play foot-ball in a match game. It is wise to obey the homely old adage, "Work while you work; play while you play."

Teddy Roosevelt: <http://wwwFOUNDATIONSmag.com/americanboy-com.html>

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