

# Is Education a "pastime" or a "way of life"?

Post by "Bryan" of May 28, 2026 at 8:25 PM

The Diogenes referenced there is Diogenes of Tarsus. We know he wrote "Selections (Ἐπιλέκτα)," as well as an "Epitome of Epicurus' Ethical Doctrines."

The two words in question are closely related:

ἡ ἀγωγή = "conduct," "training," "discipline," "method/practice," literally "a leading."

ἡ διαγωγή = "way of life," "mode of living," "manner of spending one's life" literally "a leading through."

So this could be anything from "conduct is way of life" to "practice is a mode of living," to "education is recreation." ἡ ἀγωγή can mean "education" but only in context, and the typical word for "education" is ἡ παιδεία.

Here are some other potentially related quotes (education in each case is ἡ παιδεία):

"[*Epicurus is said*] to write in a letter to Pythocles 'Avoid all education, blessed one - after taking up a little boat!'" Diogenes Laertius (fl.c. 220 CE), 10.6

I shall recall the most truth-loving Epicurus: who, though he was uninitiated in general education - he considered those people blessed who were proceeding toward philosophy similarly to himself - uttering such words: 'I bless you, O dear one, because - clear of all education - You have rushed toward philosophy!'" Athenaeus (fl.c. 200 CE), *Deipnosophists*, 13.53

"Natural science makes men who are neither boasters, nor productive of discourse, nor showing themselves to be involved in the education that is much-contested among the public - but rather serious and also self-sufficient in their own particular goods - while not greatly considering things among the [current] situations" Epicurus, VS 45

"Through the writings of Epicurus all men and all women beg and plead with Pythocles - so that he does not desire the so-called "liberal" education" Plutarch (fl. 80 CE), *Non Posse*, 1094D, 12 sup.

"Epicurus, although he seems to be bitterly hostile to the Professors; in his book On Gifts and Gratitude he definitely tries to prove that it is necessary for the wise to learn grammar. Necessary, as we should say, not for the wise only but for all men." Sextus Empiricus (fl.c. 200 CE), Against the Grammarians, 1.49

Interestingly, in Greek, "school" is the opposite of "occupation"

ἡ σχολή αἱ σχολαί	school	ΣΧΟΛΗ <i>leisure</i>
ἡ ἀσχολία αἱ ἀσχολίαι	occupation	ΑΣΧΟΛΙΑ <i>not leisure</i>