

How will today's 8 year olds want to study in 2026 and what will they want to learn?

Dear 8 year old,

I will not justify my generation for how we have treated the environment, indigenous peoples, almost extinct animal species, or perhaps even you. Maybe you have grown up thus far bubble-wrapped from the real world and simultaneously thrust mercilessly into the online world of war games, porn and hateful YouTube commenters. As you get older, there are probably some things you will want to know about. I've made a list of what I think you should go after, fight for, and learn.

1. By the time you will have come to University, global warming will not just be a mystical unicorn theory ignored by most (and some of the most important) politicians. There should be classes for you to better understand global warming and its physical effects on your life. Perhaps this class can be intertwined with knowledge of basic ecological and self-sustainable housing units, as it is always better to be prepared and self-sufficient.
2. In an increasingly technological world, the university may become a place to learn other important trade skills, such as mechanics, woodworking, electrical skills and so on. These will become essential for creating and maintaining your own eco-home.
3. The world will be in need of trained professionals in medicine, in both traditional and modern advancements. In some ways, our continued study of science and medicine is one reason why we still exist on this planet, so make it a priority to know at least the basics.
4. Language and books. Do not let the amazing history of books and literature fall away with the advancements of technology. Study the great writers, like Plato, Aristotle, Dante, and Shakespeare. Try to preserve almost forgotten languages. Words hold power, they can make nations fall and change history.
5. Study History. Mistakes are bound to repeat and perhaps you can recognize and prevent them the second time. Try and understand why wars start. Recognize that, currently, our biggest enemies are each other. Learn about other cultures histories too, as this will help you see from their point of view and avoid becoming too nationalistic or prejudice.

In a way, I feel that what I have suggested to you is a sort of survival guide. I am sorry that the world is in the state it is in. Although sometimes it may feel as if it is all an uphill battle, to learn is your greatest tool. As T.H White writes in *The Sword in The Stone*, "The best thing for disturbances of the spirit," replies Merlyn, beginning to puff and blow, "is to learn. That is the only thing that never fails". Don't be too worried if it seems that you are only one person and you cannot do it all on your own. There are others out there that feel the same and feathers fly better together.

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