TAKING INITIATIVE

WHAT A GREAT IDEA!

ED U. GATOR CLEANS UP

A GOOD ‘APPLE’
VOCABULARY:

**Invention:** something that is created.

**Initiative:** the ability to get things started or done.

**Ingenuity:** being creative and original.

**Internet:** a system for communicating with computers.

**World Wide Web:** an information system on the Internet.

**Concept:** an idea or thought.

ACTIVITY:

You might have taken initiative sometime without even knowing it! Try to think of a situation where you saw something that needed fixing or changing to make it better. What did you do about it? Did you ignore the problem, did you tell somebody else about the problem, or did you solve it yourself?
ED CLEANS UP

Hi friends. Ed here. It’s been a very busy week at our school, and I guess I’m responsible. Last Tuesday I stepped on a piece of bubble gum in the hall, and it took me 20 minutes to get it off the bottom of my shoe. Wednesday morning when we got off the bus, there was a pile of soda cans and empty food wrappers on the front steps of the school. That same afternoon Gabe couldn’t get his wheelchair up the ramp because someone had dumped some old heavy boxes full of junk on it. Thursday, Alice found some sharp pieces of broken glass on the playground. It seemed as though everywhere I looked, there was trash and other things left out that were supposed to be put away. By Friday it was really getting on my nerves! I asked Mr. Salam Ander in class if there was anything we could do about the mess. He suggested we stay after school for a while and help clean. From the grunts and groans I heard I figured that wasn’t a very popular idea. Only a few of us seemed concerned enough about the trash to do something. But since it was my idea, I decided to back up my words with some action! Luckily, Gabe, Alice, and Franklin were willing to help. The four of us worked three hours and filled up six big trash bags! It looked a lot better when we were done, but there was still tons more to do.

Over the weekend I had a better idea. I was trying to think of a way to get everybody involved in the cleanup of our school. Then I thought, “we could have a Cleanup Concert!” Maybe if we had some live music while we worked it would make the job more fun.

Monday morning I went to see Mrs. Gloria, our principal. She thought my concert idea was terrific! She helped me make some colorful posters on her computer to put up around the school. That afternoon I asked a couple of bands who practice in the neighborhood if they’d be willing to play for free. When they heard there might be hundreds of people there they got very excited! By the time Friday came around, everyone was talking about the concert. Mrs. Gloria had made an announcement the day before, saying it was okay for everyone to come to school that day in old clothes and t-shirts. The Cleanup Concert was a huge success! Some of us picked up trash, some of us cleaned windows, some of us even touched up the paint on the outside of the school. Mr. Charles from the Gatorville Hardware Store donated 10 new garbage cans to the school, and we filled every one of them! The music was great, too! I was really proud of my whole school for pitching in. And, to tell you the truth, I was pretty proud of myself for the idea, and for taking the initiative to make it happen!

QUESTIONS

1) What was getting on Ed’s nerves at school? What were some of the ways people were being irresponsible?

2) How did most of the class react to Mr. Salam Ander’s suggestion?

3) What did Ed mean by “backing up his words with action”?

4) Name a few of the concerned people who helped make Ed’s idea a success. What did they contribute to the Cleanup Concert?

5) Why was Ed proud of his school? Why was he proud of himself?

6) Dealing with garbage is a problem everywhere. What could you do to help at school or at home?
IF AT FIRST YOU DON’T SUCCEED, TRY AGAIN

Directions: Below is a maze that requires initiative to get from start to finish. Do you have what it takes to get past all those dead ends? Are you up for the challenge? I bet you are! Good luck!

FINISH THE TASK

Directions: Somebody started the words below, but didn’t have the initiative to finish them! See if you can be the responsible one who completes this task. The definitions should help you figure out the words.

1) to do something without assistance: ___P___N_______Y
2) to encourage someone to do something: M____A__E
3) to defeat or deal with an obstacle or problem: OV____C____M____
4) a chance to do something: OP____T__N___Y
5) a good outcome: SC____
6) something that has been done successfully: AC____VM____T
7) doing what's necessary without being told: IN____AT___E

ANSWERS:

(independently)
(motivate)
(overcome)
(opportunity)
(success)
(achievement)
(initiative)
(initiative)
IN THE NEWSPAPER

Directions: On page 2 we discussed a few inventions that have made our lives easier. Look through the newspaper and see how many items you can find that you use everyday. Cut them out and paste them below.

YOU MIGHT BE THE NEXT EINSTEIN!

Directions: Can you think of a solution or invention that would make something you do easier? In the space below, write about something you do that is very difficult and challenging. Then try to come up with a way to get the job done.

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Ms. Patty’s Pistachio Pies

Patty McGuire was a waitress in a small restaurant. The restaurant had only 10 tables, but from 4:30 in the afternoon till closing they were always filled. Many of the same people came each week to eat fine food and yummy desserts. The restaurant was particularly famous for its pecan pies, created by Mr. Richard the chef. They were made fresh daily, and it was not unusual for the place to sell 30 pecan pies in a night.

Patty worked very hard each evening, taking orders, delivering food and cleaning tables. She had worked there for 16 years, and was rarely absent and never late. She was dedicated to doing the best job she could do and believed in the old saying that “the customer always comes first.” It was no surprise that everyone who came to the restaurant regularly knew her, and most asked for her to be their waitress. The owner of the restaurant had great respect for Patty, because she had a knack for finding a way out of any difficult situation.

One Friday night a terrible thing happened. At six o’clock, Chef Richard realized the restaurant was almost out of pecan pies, and what’s worse, completely out of pecans! The day before Chef Richard had been very busy, and he had forgotten to order the usual amount. He ran back and forth in the kitchen, fretting and waving his hands. “What shall we do?” he cried. “No more pecans! And there’s a line of people around the block waiting to get in!” Chef Richard was making such a commotion, Patty came in the kitchen to see what the fuss was about.

“There must be something we can do,” she said. She knew the market down the street closed at five, and that the next nearest one was over an hour away. Then suddenly she remembered something. Last week when she was helping organize the stockroom in the kitchen, she noticed several boxes of pistachio nuts. “Why don’t we make pistachio pies?” she asked.

“But these people have come miles for my pecan pies!” said Chef Richard, getting more upset by the minute.

“Well,” said Patty in her perfectly practical way, “we have no pecans left. But we have lots of pistachios. I say we give it a try!” And that’s exactly what they did. And guess what? Those funny-looking bright green pistachio pies turned out to be a huge success. The restaurant sold 25 pies that night, and 200 in the following week. Soon people were coming from everywhere for a taste of the restaurant’s new pie sensation. The owners were so pleased with Patty’s initiative, that they named the pie after her: Ms. Patty’s Pistachio Pie!
The words “Apple” and “Macintosh” may sound like funny names for computers, but millions of them are used all over the world. Many computers in schools and universities are Apples.

The Apple Computer Company was started in 1976 by Steven Jobs and Stephen Wozniak. Jobs was born in 1955, and was adopted by Paul and Clara Jobs of Mountain View, California. Wozniak was also born in California, in 1950. The two men were working at Hewlett-Packard in California when they first met. They shared an enthusiasm for electronics and technology.

Jobs left Hewlett-Packard and later worked for Atari designing video games. Jobs and Wozniak joined up again while attending meetings of a computer club, and decided then to try developing a new computer. They designed the first one in Jobs’ parents’ garage. A local electronics store bought 25 of the first model. By April of 1976, more than 600 Apple computers had been made and sold.

The company soon expanded into manufacturing printers and computer software. In 1982 the company became the first personal computer company to reach $1 billion in annual sales. Not bad for a company that began in a garage!

Today Apple produces computer systems for business, education, government and home use. Apple products are available in 120 countries, and has facilities in the United States, Ireland and Singapore. Jobs and Wozniak are great examples of individuals willing to take initiative. They began their company with very little, and with perseverance and imagination, created one of the most famous and successful companies in the world.
TIPS

1) Developing the ability to complete tasks and follow through on activities is a very important one, but difficult to learn, and teach, in the midst of hectic daily schedules. We often rush our children through days filled with commitments, and then get frustrated by their diminishing attention spans. Look for opportunities during the day, or at least during the week, when motion is at a minimum. Giving your child adequate time to complete a project will also show him you appreciate the end result of her efforts.

2) Try to instill as much independence in your child as possible. Give your child some "free time" that isn't restricted by activities you direct or in which you participate. This may "free" up some time for you, too.

3) Kids can learn a lot from television, but it can also severely limit a child's creativity and initiative. While watching TV a child doesn't have to interact with anyone or use his imagination. Sometimes this "down time" is necessary for busy families, but the amount of time spent watching should be carefully monitored.

4) As your child learns to take initiative, she will probably make many mistakes in the process. Most learning is based on trial and error. Try not to criticize or belittle your child for her attempts at independence, or she may decide she's incapable of doing these tasks and, worst of all, give up trying. Look for creative ways to instruct and "redirect" your child back on course.

FAMILY ACTIVITY

We all have necessary household projects that go unfinished (or never get started) weekend after weekend. Try to set aside some time as a family and make a list of the projects that have been lingering the longest. Encourage your child to make suggestions on how to accomplish one or more of these tasks. If possible, let your child participate in its completion. Your child may learn the value of following through an endeavor to fruition, and your whole family will benefit by striking one more project off the list!

RESOURCES


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