

SRINIVASAN COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCE

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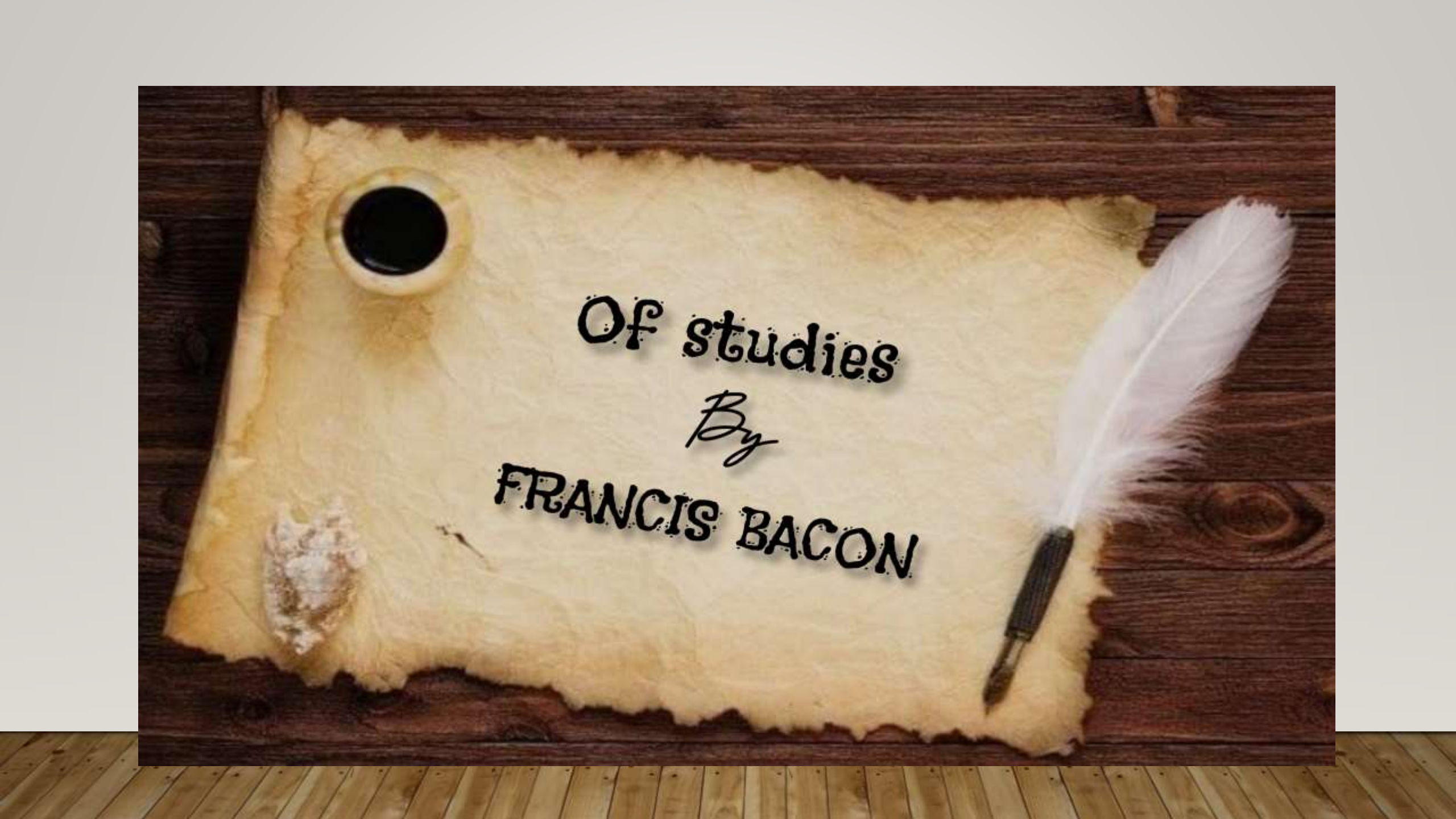
Department of ENGLISH

Prose – "Of Studies" by Francis Bacon

By

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The image shows a title page on a piece of aged, yellowed parchment with irregular, torn edges. The parchment is set against a dark brown wooden background. In the top left corner, there is a circular hole, likely from a binding. A white quill pen with a dark handle lies on the right side of the parchment. The text is centered and reads: 'Of studies' in a large, black, serif font; 'By' in a smaller, black, cursive font; and 'FRANCIS BACON' in a large, black, serif font. There is a small, irregular white stain on the parchment near the bottom left corner.

Of studies
By
FRANCIS BACON



**Author's
Background**

- born on **January 22, 1561** in **London, England**.
- In his late teens, he practiced of **Law** in **Trinity College**.
- At 23, he became a **member of the "House of Commons"**
- During his career as **counsel** and **statesman**, Bacon often wrote for the court. In **1584**, he wrote his first political memorandum, *A Letter of Advice to Queen Elizabeth*.
- In **1592**, to celebrate the anniversary of the queen's coronation, he wrote an entertaining speech in praise of knowledge. The year **1597** marked Bacon's first publication, **a collection of essays about politics**. The collection was later expanded and republished in **1612** and **1625**.



Francis Bacon

- His career flourished under King James I, but later scandals ended his life as a **politician**.
- He was imprisoned in the tower of London stripped of all offices and honors for having accepted bribes as Chief Justice of England.
- He was also a **philosopher/ scientist** by nature.
- Known as the "**Father of Empiricism**," Francis Bacon established the **Baconian method** to investigate natural science. His approach led to the development of the scientific method, which is still used.
- He died on **April 9, 1626**, at the age of **65**, because of **bronchitis**.



Francis Bacon



explication

Kind of Essay:

- **Formal Essay**
 - Intellectual discussion
 - Builds up a formal and serious tone
 - Caters to the mind

Type of Essay:

- Didactic
 - Aims to teach
 - Lays out the value of knowledge in practical terms
 - Full of wisdom

Methods Used:

1. Comparison and Contrast

- Shows similarities and differences of the items included and focused.

2. Illustration

- Explains a general statement by means of more specific examples.

Comparison and Contrast

“for natural abilities are like natural plants, that need pruning, by study.”

“Crafty men contemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them”

“Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested”

Comparison and Contrast

“Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man.”

“Histories make men wise; poets witty; the mathematics subtle; natural philosophy deep; moral grave; logic and rhetoric able to contend.”

“Nay, there is no stound or impediment in the wit, but may be wrought out by fit studies; like as diseases of the body, may have appropriate exercises”

Illustration

"Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability."

"Bowling is good for the stone and reins; shooting for the lungs and breast; gentle walking for the stomach; riding for the head; and the like."

Figures of Speech Used:

1. Simile

- A stated comparison (usually formed with "like" or "as") between two fundamentally dissimilar things that have certain qualities in common.

2. Litotes

-an understatement in which a positive statement is expressed by negating its opposite.

Simile

“Natural abilities are like natural plants, that need pruning, by study”

“Distilled books are like common distilled waters, flashy things”

Archaic Words

1. Maketh – makes
“Reading maketh a full man”

2. Doth – does
“He had need have much cunning, to seem
to know, that he doth not”

Archaic Words

3. Nay – no

4. Stond – hindrance

“Nay, there is no stond or impediment in the wit, but may be wrought out by fit studies;”

Style

Parallelism/ Use of parallel sentence structure

- by using pairs or series of related words, phrases and clauses

- more used of the punctuations such as colon, semi colon and comma



Exegies

Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight, is in privateness and retiring; for ornament, is in discourse; and for ability, is in the judgment, and disposition of business.

Explanation:

Delight: some people gain knowledge for pleasure. People, who acquire knowledge for delight, do so because they enjoy it. For instance, those who play sports, they practice and learn about their sport because they want to, not because they have to.

Ornament: some people who gain knowledge for decoration. These people only want to improve themselves in the eyes of others. These are the people who try to better themselves by bragging about their achievements and accomplishments in conversation with others.

Ability: they want to show that they are able to do something. Ability is widely used in the area of business, those who are well educated rather than those who are not better run a company.

To spend too much time in studies is sloth; to use them too much for ornament, is affectation; to make judgment wholly by their rules, is the humor of a scholar.

Explanation:

Setting aside long hours in a day to study will make a man lazy. Overuse of the wisdom to analyze may make the man appear pretentious and arrogant.

Sticking too much to rules to assess situations and decide on action may invite derision from others.

They perfect nature, and are perfected by experience: for natural abilities are like natural plants, that need pruning, by study; and studies themselves, do give forth directions too much at large, except they be bounded in by experience.

Explanation:

Moderation is the key to using studies appropriately: studies are wonderful only if influenced by experience because a person's natural abilities are enhanced by studies, but studies without experience, lead to confusion in dealing with the outside world.

Crafty men condemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them; for they teach not their own use; but that is a wisdom without them, and above them, won by observation.

Explanation:

People who are deceitful have no appreciation for studies as they accomplish their objectives through many crooked ways. Simple folks, however, greatly value the role of studies in human life. Wise people inherently draw upon the ideas obtained from their studies while solving life's myriad problems.

Read not to contradict and confute; nor to believe and take for granted; nor to find talk and discourse; but to weigh and consider.

Explanation:

The aim of reading and acquiring knowledge must not be to aggressively refute other's views or accept the writer's views as gospel truth. It should also not be to engage in pointless argumentation. Studying should enable us to weigh facts and analyze them wisely.

Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention.

Explanation:

Books of varying content have different uses. Some may be given a brief reading, some others can be quickly examined through. Other important books are to be read slowly and minutely so as to truly fathom the meaning and essential sense.

Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man.

Explanation:

Discussing with others about the contents of a book imparts special practical skills to the reader. Writing removes all the residual weaknesses and ignorance from the person and enables him to remember the contents of a book.

And therefore, if a man write little, he had need have a great memory; if he confer little, he had need have a present wit: and if he read little, he had need have much cunning, to seem to know, that he doth not.

Explanation:

Writing helps to memorize facts. If a person is bashful so as not to discuss his reading with others, he will not be able to improve his wit. If he does not read, he will remain a somewhat stupid person.

Histories make men wise; poets witty; the mathematics subtle; natural philosophy deep; moral grave; logic and rhetoric able to contend.

Explanation:

Studying history makes a man wiser, studying poetry makes a man wittier: mathematics gives sound logical sense, and philosophy imparts valuable lessons on morality.

Abeunt studia in mores. Nay, there is no stound or impediment in the wit, but may be wrought out by fit studies; like as diseases of the body, may have appropriate exercises. Bowling is good for the stone and reins; shooting for the lungs and breast; gentle walking for the stomach; riding for the head; and the like.

Explanation:

Wit is a God-given gift. It is present in everybody. However, it can be sharpened by selective studying. This is similar to the way certain weaknesses of the human body are cured by appropriate physical exercises.

So if a man's wit be wandering, let him study the mathematics; for in demonstrations, if his wit be called away never so little, he must begin again.

Explanation:

If a person is unable to concentrate, he will do well to study mathematics to focus his wavering mind. In mathematics, a slight loss of concentration leads to grave error. This makes the man to start all over again to do it. Thus, studying mathematics restrains the mind from darting off elsewhere.

If his wit be not apt to distinguish or find differences, let him study the Schoolmen; for they are *cumini sectores*.

Explanation:

If a person does not have the ability to discern/ distinguish, he will be benefited by studying Schoolmen as it trains mental ability and develops the art of expression.

If he be not apt to beat over matters, and to call up one thing to prove and illustrate another, let him study the lawyers' cases. So every defect of the mind, may have a special receipt.

Explanation:

If a person is unable to garner facts and manipulate them to put across his views convincingly, studying law will help him. Thus, every deficiency of mind can be addressed by appropriate reading.

THEME:

Study brings us joy and enhances our thinking, speaking and writing ability, and adds charm to our personality.

Summary:

Francis Bacon's "Of Studies" serves reading of books as a means in finding man's purpose in life. It emphasizes the importance of knowledge, open-mindedness, and theory empowering skill. Without books, there would not be any needed improvement for man hence no other means of satisfying his curiosity. A man's purpose in life is not limited to appreciating on what he has for, in some perspective, man has insatiable desires and needs. Hence, being alive means wanting to know more. The main point of all of it is that there will always be new discoveries; always a reason to obliterate existing knowledge with a new one.

Quiz

1. Who is the author of "Of Studies"?

2. "Of studies" is what kind of essay?

3. Give the theme of the essay?



