

“From *Education*” by Emerson Discussion Questions
AP Lang – Mr. Daniels

1. In this essay, Emerson describes his view of an ideal education. What are its defining characteristics?
2. In what ways is Emerson’s advice appropriate to a child’s first teacher—his or her own parents?
3. Why is the relationship between “Genius and Drill,” as Emerson explains it, paradoxical (para. 3)?
4. Why does Emerson believe “it is better to teach the child arithmetic and Latin grammar than rhetoric or moral philosophy” (para. 5)?
5. In what ways does this essay point out the education system’s effect on teachers as well as students?
6. What exactly is the “natural method” to which Emerson refers (para. 8)?
7. Why does Emerson criticize schools as bureaucratic institutions (para. 10)?
8. Describe the adult that Emerson imagines would emerge from an education based on the principles he supports.
9. What does Emerson describe as the best way to be educated? Explain. (Para. 13)
10. How would you describe Emerson’s tone in this essay? Explain.
11. Evaluate your own schooling according to the criteria presented in paragraph 10. How is the education that Emerson describes similar to your own? How is it different?