

Noam Chomsky – [On Being Truly Educated](#), YouTube, 27 May 2015,
retrieved 28 September 2023

My name is [Noam Chomsky](#). I'm a retired professor at the [Massachusetts Institute of Technology](#) where I've been for 65 years.

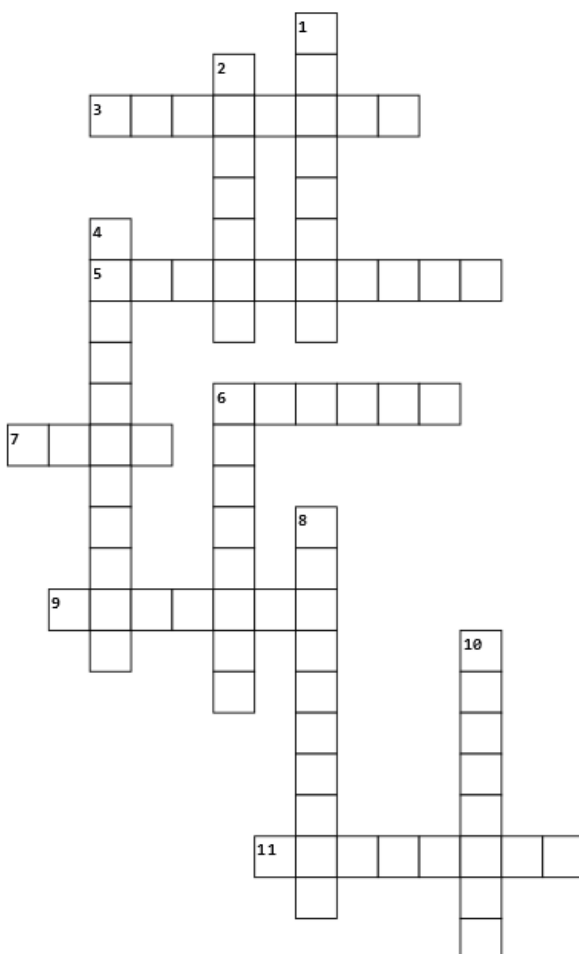
I think I can do no better about answering the question of what it means to be truly educated than to go back to some of the classic views on the subject: for example the views expressed by the founder of the modern higher education system [Wilhelm von Humboldt](#), a leading humanist figure of the [Enlightenment](#) who wrote extensively on education and human development and argued – I think kind of very plausibly – that the core principle and requirement of a fulfilled human being is the ability to inquire and create constructively, independently, without external controls.

To move to a modern counterpart, a leading physicist, who taught right here used to tell his classes that it's not important what we cover in the class, it's important what you discover. But to be truly educated from this point of view means to be in a position to inquire and create on the basis of the resources available to you which you've come to appreciate and comprehend; to know where to look; to know how to form formulate serious questions; to question a standard doctrine, if that's appropriate; to find your own way to shape the questions that are worth pursuing and to develop the path to pursue them.

That means knowing, understanding many things. But also, much more important than what you have stored in your mind, to know where to look, how to look, how to question, how to challenge, how to proceed independently, to deal with the challenges that the world presents to you, and that you develop in the course of your self-education, and inquiry and the investigations in cooperation and solidarity with others.

That's what an educational system should cultivate from kindergarten to the high graduate school. And in the best cases sometimes does. And that leads to people who are – at least by my standards – well-educated.

Do the following crossword puzzle on “Education”. You can also do in [on-line here](#).



Across

3. One of the two main divisions of the academic year, typically lasting 15-18 weeks.
5. Set courses constituting an area of specialization, offered by an educational institution.
6. Long piece of writing on a particular subject, especially one submitted for a university degree.
7. Formal test taken by students, to show knowledge in a subject, typically written or oral.
9. Certificate granted by a high school, college, or university, to verify completion of a program.
11. Assignments given to students to be completed outside of class.

Down

1. Ability to read and write.
2. Oral presentation intended to teach people about a particular subject, typically given by a professor.
4. Financial aid awarded to students, based on academic or other achievements, to help pursue their studies.
6. Standard book used for study of a subject, often used in schools and universities.
8. Act of receiving or conferring an academic degree or the ceremony that is sometimes associated, where students become graduates.
10. Art or science of teaching; instructional methods and strategies.