



Here's an excerpt from: "What Made Them Say That?"

*This tid-bit about Spartan students will help your students keep schoolwork in perspective!*

## ***The School of Hard Knocks***

School systems today don't place too much of an emphasis on learning how to churn butter in a barrel. It is, however, considered pretty important to learn computer basics. The reasoning is simple—in the 17<sup>th</sup> century it was essential to learn how to churn butter, but today it's just not that big a deal. Today, it's important to know about computers.



The Spartans didn't care about butter or computers. They had a different idea all together. Sparta, a Greek city-state that existed over 2,000 years ago, wanted its children to grow to be warriors. At the age of seven, all males were sent to a rigid military school. They were taught discipline, toughness, endurance, and survival. Often, they were exposed to painful torture just to build more character (*math class does not count as painful torture*). Only the best attended the school because all of the weak or sickly children were shunned at birth.

For thirteen years, the Spartan students studied on how to effectively serve in the military. Finally, at the age of twenty, they became full-fledged soldiers. As cruel as it was, the system worked. By the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, the small state of Sparta was the strongest in all of Greece, and it didn't hesitate to prove it. From 500 BC to 300 BC, Sparta was involved in numerous wars with surrounding city-states (*especially its greatest rival, Athens*). Eventually, the wars took their toll, and Sparta fell from power in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC.

**Excerpt from:**

**Bache, Ben. *Back in the Good Old Days*. Greenville, SC: Homecourt Publishers, 2003.**