

Loud Talking Required!

A Brief Study of Blab School
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If you were living along the American frontier during the 1800s, sitting quietly in class would probably have gotten you into a heap of trouble! That's the way it was in blab school. Things were certainly different in those 19th century classrooms.

To begin with, pioneer children didn't have to go to school if they didn't want to. Those who wished to be educated could walk, ride a horse, or catch a buggy each morning to a local one-room log cabin with a dirt floor. Inside, students of all ages sat on long wooden benches. They practiced writing and arithmetic on slates. Typically, only the teacher had books, and those were few.

In these primitive surroundings, youngster learned reading, writing, and arithmetic. They did it by reciting their lessons over and over until they had them memorized. They swayed back and forth, calling out their spelling words or chanting a poem—the louder the better. People passing by could hear the racket, and they began calling these noisy study sessions “blab school.”

The teacher made them do it!

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