

Guidelines for Independent Study

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Begin each lesson by reading out loud through the introduction and objectives. It is important to read everything out loud if possible. In Bahá'u'lláh's Writings He repeatedly instructs the believers to *recite* the verses or to *utter* the prayers. Reading the material out loud will help you understand it better and retain the information longer.

Once you have read through the introduction and objectives, proceed with the selected quotations:

1. **READING:** Read the first quotation out loud in its entirety.
2. **CONFIRMING MEANING:** If you would like to have better understanding of a word used in the quotation you can refer to its substitute phrase, definition, or synonym from the boxes below the quotation. Read the substitute phrase, definition, or synonym out loud. These are here to help clarify and confirm the true meaning and intent of the author. Now read out loud the sentence that contains the **word** you selected, **while substituting for that word**, its given phrase, definition, or synonym from the boxes below the quotation. This step is very important, so take your time and enjoy it. If you would like better understanding of another word, repeat this process.
3. **FINDING VALUE:** Read the quotation out loud again in its entirety. The instructions then say: "Take turns stating each basic fact or truth you can find in the quotation about..." You will replace this statement with the question: "What basic facts or truths can "I" find in the quotation about..." While browsing through the quotation, try to identify facts, truths, or important points about the subjects identified in the objectives. Either state each one out loud or write them down.
4. Proceed in the same way with each of the numbered quotations.

The **SHARING EXERCISE** is very valuable as it allows you to identify and speak about those very special spiritual feelings generated by reading and studying the Bahá'í Writings. You will have no one to share with if you do this alone; however, just going through the exercise, writing it out, and stating it verbally is still important and can be especially moving.

Answer the questions in the exercise titled, **SOME QUESTIONS**, as directed in the facilitator's instructions. When you have finished, you will find the answers at the end of the lesson.

APPLICATION EXERCISE: First ask yourself the following question: How *could* the Bahá'í Teachings in this study class be translated into reality and action? Begin your answers with: "*One could...*" Exhaust the possibilities. Here is where having someone to study with is really valuable. When you study alone, you can identify some ways to apply the information; however, when you study with others, this exercise reveals many possibilities.

Complete the exercise by writing out how you will make conscious efforts to translate what you have learned from this study class into reality and action. (NOTE: The first three lessons have no application exercise.)

Finish the lesson by reading through the closing meditation.

All His blessings,

Steve