

# Sukhomlinsky News

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## An eye for detail

*This month's main translation is an extract from Pavlysh Secondary School, in which Sukhomlinsky talks about the facilities at his school, and in particular about a network of reading rooms that supplemented the school library. Sukhomlinsky was interested in every element of his school program, and particularly in what his students were reading. He encouraged every student at his school to read widely from world literature, and especially to read certain classics that he considered essential for a rounded education.*

*Best wishes,*

*Alan Cockerill*

## Classroom facilities at Pavlysh

In this month's extract from *Pavlysh Secondary School*, Sukhomlinsky describes the classroom facilities at his school, and the provision of reading material in several reading rooms. Sukhomlinsky had many visitors to his school, and you can imagine him proudly showing them around, going into lots of detail about how they sourced reading material and how the students used the facilities. While some of the things he describes may seem quite ordinary today, it must have taken a lot of blood, sweat and tears to get to this stage from the devastation that would have confronted him during the early postwar years. We should also bear in mind that some of the sections in his reading room for senior students would have represented the frontiers of science and technology during the 1960s, when he was writing.

### Our classrooms and extracurricular work

Lessons at our school are conducted in four buildings. The main building, with ten classrooms, houses grades five to ten (grades five to seven on the ground floor, and grades eight to ten on the first floor). In the three adjacent buildings are classrooms for grades one, two, three and four. In each building there is a staff room.

Each of the smaller buildings is like a home in which a family lives, where all the children know each other. Gradually each of these families also joins the life of the whole school community.

[continued on the next page]



## From Pavlysh Secondary School [cont.]

There is none of the hustle and bustle or pushing and shoving, from which little children tire so quickly. From their home building children run straight out into a garden with green lawns. There are concrete paths that allow them, in any weather, without getting their shoes wet, to access the other buildings, so they can visit their friends, older or younger.

When they arrive at school, the children leave their coats on coat hooks, and do not put them on again until it is time to walk home. However often they need to walk from one building to another, (and this happens several times a day), they do not put their coats on.

In each of the buildings for younger children, and on each floor of the main building, there is a reading room, a place where children can constantly develop themselves intellectually, morally and aesthetically. In these rooms they will find a collection of literature that is continually updated: popular science books, magazines and brochures, children's anthologies on science and technology, a children's encyclopedia and works of fiction. There are also stands with age-appropriate literature in the corridors. These books are arranged and tidied by the students themselves, as part of their Pioneer and Communist Youth League duties. Anyone can read a book at school or take it home to read. Everything that is on offer in the reading rooms is designed to gradually draw students beyond the framework of the standard curriculum, so that reading can become a favourite pastime. The allocation of a special room for reading, and the systematic attention to the development of individual interests, is a very important aspect of intel-

lectual education.

Taking into consideration what is of special interest to the children at any given time, and what is providing a foundation for their intellectual development, our teachers select books and place them in bookshelves, with each shelf being allocated to a particular branch of knowledge. For example, in the reading rooms for grades one to four, literature is arranged according to the following sections:

The non-living natural world; the living natural world; flowers; fruit trees; birds; work; people; art; the past of our homeland and of humanity; the peoples of the world; the lives of outstanding people; the lives and deeds of Pioneer heroes; technology; tales from around the world; games, riddles, proverbs and sayings.

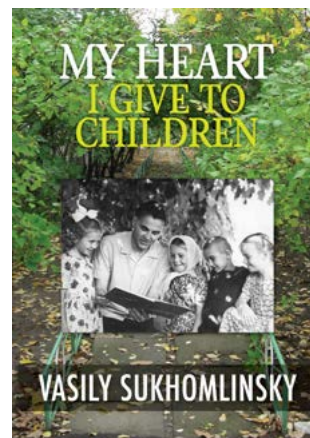
In the reading room for years five to seven, books are arranged in the following sections:

The world of plants and animals; the natural environments of our homeland; flowers; fruit trees; birds; inanimate nature; countries and peoples of the world; our homeland's past; the lives of outstanding people; we are friends, comrades, brothers and sisters to each other (books on collectivism, friendship and mutual help); mathematics and physics; mechanics; electronics; chemistry; automation and radio electronics; science fiction; trades and professions; tales from around the world; books on heroism; games, riddles, proverbs and sayings.

In the reading room for years eight to ten the various sections according to which literature is arranged reflect youthful aspirations to encompass the richness and complexity of the world, with special attention being given to the frontiers of science. Here are the names of those sections:

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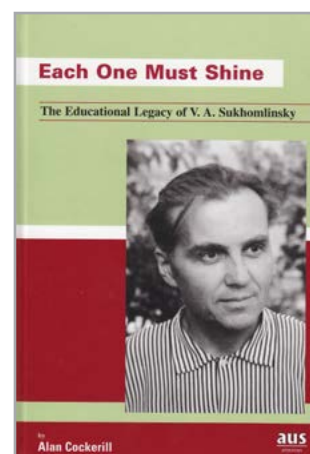
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The individual personality and the collective; the society of the future; what is morality; we are friends, comrades, brothers and sisters to each other; great dreamers—the utopian socialists; campaigners for social and moral progress in all eras and nations; eminent scientists, writers, composers, sculptors, artists and performers; outstanding people of labour; matter and energy; the world of elementary particles, fields, gravitation, electronics, cybernetics, telemechanics and bionics; chemistry; biochemistry; astronomy and astronautics; our contemporaries at home and overseas; in life there is always a place for heroic deeds; problems that are yet to be solved by science; journal and newspaper articles discussing current issues in society, literature and art; science fiction and the world of adventure; love and friendship; professions and trades; the shorter soviet encyclopedia, dictionaries and reference books.

In addition, in each reading room there are the following magazines: *Knowledge is power*, *Technology for young people*, *The young technician*, *The young naturalist*, *Knowledge and work* (in Ukrainian), *Nature*, *Around the world*, *New world*, *October*, *Problems of physics*, *Art*, *Youth*, *Young people and technology* (in German), *Friendship* (in French), *Aesthetic education* (in Czech).

Without this extracurricular reading, our class lessons would be reduced to rote learning.

Books for each section are purchased using a special book fund. To fail to supplement the literature in our reading rooms would be to dig up the roots that feed the intellectual work taking place in lessons.

I will cite a list of books and brochures on offer in the 'Inanimate nature' section of the reading room for grades five to eight.

[There follows a list of about 40 books on topics that include rivers and water, the wind and the atmosphere, electricity, the weather, physics, geology and mineralogy, the solar system, subatomic particles, etc.]

In the main school building apart from classrooms there is a mathematics laboratory, a language and literature room, a language laboratory with an audio library, a radio studio (with a school radio network), a music room, a Pioneer room, a Young Communist League room, a school museum, a teaching methodology room, a parent room, a photography darkroom, an art corner, a gymnasium, a quiet room (where students can withdraw to reflect, dream, talk with a friend or read a book or newspaper), and a store-room where students can access cleaning equipment for their regular cleaning duties.

Students in grades five to ten have all their lessons in the main building, with the exception of physics, chemistry, biology and vocational studies, which are taken in laboratories and workshops located in other buildings. In warm weather, physical education lessons are conducted on our sports ground in the open air.

In the mathematics laboratory many students of all ages come for activities conducted outside lesson times. This is where the clubs for young mathematicians gather. Here you can find mathematics games for younger and middle school children, while for older students there are books on the history of mathematics, collections of mathematics problems, calculators and other mathematics equipment. There is also a collection of all the school's past mathematics exam papers.

In the language and literature room are copies of two hundred works of fiction that every student is expected to read during

their school years, in order to be well-educated in the field of literature. That is significantly less than a person normally reads by the time they reach adulthood, but to ensure that students read these particular books (and have read some of them several times) is quite a complex educational task. Here there are lists of literature recommended for reading at each year level; and separate lists of books that children are expected to read several times. Without this we cannot imagine a complete moral and aesthetic education. Here there are also commentaries on classical works of fiction, compiled by the students, advice for young students, exercise books containing exemplary essays written by past students, issues of our own literary wall display newspaper, and the archive for our handwritten literary journal 'Our creative writing'.

The list of works that we recommend students read several times is prefaced by the following words:

'Young men and women, here are the titles of books that are among the literary treasures of humanity. You should read them several times. These books will teach you how to live and will reveal to you the beauty of art.'

The list includes:

[There follows a list of books that includes many works of world literature, as well as of Russian, Ukrainian and Soviet literature. The list includes Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *King Lear*, Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, Goethe's *Faust*, Tolstoy's *War and Peace* and *Resurrection*, Schiller's *William Tell*, Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*, Balzac's *The Skin of Sorrow (La Peau de chagrin)*, Jack London's *Martin Eden*, Shota Rustaveli's *Knight in a Tiger Skin*, and several other classical works of literature.]



## Stories for Children

### Excursion to Kanev

The year five students were preparing for an excursion to Kanev. They were excited. They were going to see so many new and exciting things. They were going to visit the grave of Taras Shevchenko.

Galya wanted to go with them, but suddenly her mother fell seriously ill. Galya came to school sad, with eyes red from crying.

'Why are you so sad?' asked her friends.

'Mum is really sick. I won't come on the excursion.'

The children became heavy of heart. How can you be excited and have fun when your friend has such grief to bear?

The children decided to wait until Galya's mum got better, and then go on the excursion.

Three weeks passed. Galya's mother got better. The class went on the excursion, and Galya went with them.

You may be very happy about something, while another person may be experiencing grief. To understand another's grief is a beautiful quality in a human being.

### A glass of water

Yura's grandfather was eighty-five years old. He knew many interesting stories. His eight year old grandson loved to listen to the wonderful stories that his grandfather told him.

But his grandfather fell ill. He was lying in bed, and breathing heavily. When his mother went to work, she told Yura:

'Sit next to grandpa, Yura, and look after him. If he asks for water, get him a fresh glass of water. If he asks you to open the window, open it for him.'

Yura sat by his grandfather's bed and read a book. During the first half of the day, grandpa asked him for water just three times.

The boy was bored sitting next to the sick old man. He put his book on the bedside table, crept out of the house, and ran to play soccer with his friends.

Yura played for a long time at the soccer ground, until the sun was close to the horizon. But the boy felt uneasy in his heart. Yura left the game and ran home.

He quietly opened the door, went to his grandfather's bed and got down on his knees. Grandpa was lying very still. There was not a drop of water in his glass.

For the rest of his life Yura was tormented by pangs of conscience. He thought, 'Grandpa probably died because there was no water. He was thirsty, but there was not a drop of water in his glass. And all that time I was playing soccer with my friends.'

'Do what you have to do, not what you want to do,' Yura taught his son.

### They laughed at the old lady

One day some children were playing soccer at the soccer ground. They were having a lot of fun playing together.

A very old lady walked quietly past. She could not see very well, and walked very slowly, feeling her way with a stick.

One of the boys kicked the ball hard, and it bounced over to the lady, just missing her legs, and knocking her stick out of her hand. The old lady stopped, confused, and did not know what to do. She bent over, feeling for her stick, but it was lying some distance away, and she could not see it.

The children watched the old lady and laughed. None of them thought to go up to the old lady, ask her forgiveness, and help her. The children were laughing, while the old lady stood and cried. And it did not enter anyone's head that at that moment a great evil was being done. One human being was mocking another.