

CONNECTING THE DOTS: Steve Jobs, Stanford commencement speech, 2005.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5BSbOc5VYY8>

1. BEFORE LISTENING

Discuss with a partner:

1. What does the expression “**connecting the dots**” mean?
2. Do you think the decisions we make today can affect our future?
3. Can a failure or a difficult experience become useful later in life?
4. What is more important: having a clear plan or being open to new opportunities?

2. LISTENING

Listen to Steve Jobs talking about his first story.

Answer these questions:

1. Why did Steve Jobs drop out of college?
2. Did he completely stop attending classes?
3. What subject did he become interested in?
4. How did this subject help him later?
5. What did he learn from this experience?

3. LISTENING – Complete the sentences

Listen again and complete the sentences with **ONE** or **TWO** words.

1. You can't connect the dots looking _____.
2. You can only connect them looking _____.
3. You have to trust that the dots will somehow _____ in your future.
4. You have to trust in something, your _____.
5. This approach has never let me _____.
6. It made all the _____.

Answers:

1. forward
2. backwards
3. connect
4. gut
5. down
6. difference

4. VOCABULARY

Match the words/expressions with their meanings.

Word / expression	Meaning
1. drop out	a. follow your feelings/intuition
2. calligraphy	b. stop studying at a school/university
3. connect the dots	c. beautiful handwriting

Word / expression	Meaning
4. gut	d. understand how past events are related
5. have faith	e. trust or believe in something

Answers:

1-b 2-c 3-d 4-a 5-e

5. TRUE OR FALSE

Decide whether the statements are **True or False**. Correct the false ones.

1. Steve Jobs graduated from college.
2. He continued attending classes that interested him.
3. He studied calligraphy because he knew it would help him create Apple.
4. At the time, he didn't know why calligraphy would be useful.
5. Years later, his knowledge of calligraphy influenced the design of computers.
6. Steve Jobs believes we can understand the importance of events while they are happening.

Answers

1. False – Steve Jobs dropped out of college after six months.
2. True.
3. False – He studied calligraphy because he was interested in it.
4. True.
5. True.
6. False – We can only understand the importance of events when we look back at the

6. AFTER LISTENING

Complete this personal timeline with **three important experiences** from your life.

DOT 1 → DOT 2 → DOT 3

For each experience, write:

- *What happened?*
- *What did you learn?*
- *How could it be useful in the future?*
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Then discuss with a partner:

“Do you think we can understand the importance of our experiences only when we look back?”

7. SPEAKING

In pairs, discuss:

Steve Jobs says that we cannot connect the dots looking forward; we can only connect them looking backwards. Do you agree? Why or why not?

Try to use these expressions:

- *In my opinion...*
- *I agree because...*

- I partly agree because...
- Looking back, I realise that...
- At the time, I didn't realise that...
- This experience taught me that...
- It turned out to be useful because...

Extension for 1º Bachillerato: After the activity, students can write **80–100 words** answering:

“Describe an experience that seemed unimportant at the time but became useful later.”

Grammar Activity

8. Complete the sentences with the correct form of the verb in brackets: past tenses, present perfect, past perfect, passive voice y reported speech.

1. Steve Jobs _____ (drop) out of college after six months.
2. He _____ (continue) attending classes that interested him.
3. Before he attended the calligraphy course, he _____ never _____ (study) typography.
4. He _____ (learn) about different typefaces and how to make beautiful letters.
5. At the time, he _____ (not / realise) how useful this knowledge would be.
6. Years later, this knowledge _____ (use) when he designed the Macintosh computer.
7. Jobs said that he _____ (can) only understand the importance of his experiences when he looked back.
8. He explained that the dots _____ (connect) only when we look backwards.
9. The decisions we make today _____ (can / not / always / understand) immediately.
10. Jobs believes that we _____ (have to) trust that the dots will connect in the future.

Answers:

1. Steve Jobs **dropped** (drop) out of college after six months.
2. He **continued** (continue) attending classes that interested him.
3. Before he attended the calligraphy course, he **had never studied** (never / study) typography.
4. He **learned** (learn) about different typefaces and how to make beautiful letters.
5. At the time, he **didn't realise** (not / realise) how useful this knowledge would be.
6. Years later, this knowledge **was used** (use) when he designed the Macintosh computer.
7. Jobs said that he **could** (can) only understand the importance of his experiences when he looked back.
8. He explained that the dots **could be connected** (connect) only when we look backwards.

9. The decisions we make today **cannot always be understood** (can / not / always / understand) immediately.
10. Jobs believes that we **have to** (have to) trust that the dots will connect in the future

Challenge – Rewrite

9. Rewrite the sentences using the word given. **Do not change the meaning.**

1. Jobs left university after six months.

DROPPED

→ Jobs _____ university after six months.

2. At the time, he didn't know that calligraphy would be useful.

REALISE

→ At the time, he _____ that calligraphy would be useful.

3. He learned calligraphy, and years later he used this knowledge.

AFTER

→ He used this knowledge _____ calligraphy.

4. "You can only connect the dots looking backwards," Jobs said.

THAT

→ Jobs said _____ the dots looking backwards.

5. People cannot always understand the importance of their experiences immediately.

BE

→ The importance of people's experiences _____ immediately.

Answers

1. Jobs **dropped out of** university after six months.
2. At the time, he **didn't realise** that calligraphy would be useful.
3. He used this knowledge **after he had learned** calligraphy.
4. Jobs said **that you could only connect** the dots looking backwards.
5. The importance of people's experiences **cannot always be understood** immediately.