

# BEST QUOTES ON READING

Reading gives us some place to go when we have to stay where we are.

—Mason Cooley

The man who does not read good books has no advantage over the man who can't read them.

--Mark Twain

Reading is to the mind, what exercise is to the body.

—Joseph Addison

Every man who knows how to read has it in his power to magnify himself, to multiply the ways in which he exists, to make his life full, significant and interesting.

--Aldous Huxley

I am a part of all that I have read.

--John Kieran

Half of today's teenagers don't read books—except when they're made to.

--Niall Ferguson (2011)

No subject of study is more important than reading...all other intellectual powers depend on it.

--Jacques Barzun

Common sense should tell us that reading is the ultimate weapon—destroying ignorance, poverty and despair before they can destroy us. A nation that doesn't read much doesn't know much. And a nation that doesn't know much is more likely to make poor choices in the home, the marketplace, the jury box and the voting booth....The challenge, therefore, is to convince future generations of children that carrying a book is more rewarding than carrying guns.

--Jim Trelease

The state of literacy in the United States today is declining so precipitously, while video and computer technologies are becoming so powerful that the act of reading itself may well be on the way to obsolescence.

--Janet E. Healy

I took a speed reading course and read *War and Peace* in twenty minutes. It's about Russia.

--Woody Allen

I used to take out seven books at a time from the library and sit in the kitchen, with my feet in the oven, eating cookies and reading trash. I think trash is a very important part of youth reading. It acts like mulch and helps fertilize the brain and allows creative ideas to germinate and grow.

--S. J. Perelman

The best moments in reading are when you come across something—a thought, a feeling, a way of looking at things—which you had thought special and particular to you. Now here it is, set down by someone else, a person you have never met, someone even who is long dead. And it is as if a hand has come out and taken yours.

—Alan Bennett

If you don't like to read, you haven't found the right book.

—J. K. Rowling

The art of reading is in great part that of acquiring a better understanding of life from one's encounter with it in a book.

--Andre Maurois

How can you be bored? There are so many books to read!

—Lailah Gifty Akita

The people who do not have time to read books because they are watching television would, in the pre-TV era, not have had time to read books because they were driving over to see Cousin Nellie or were going to the movies or were building a model railroad.

--Granville Hicks

I was able to place my own concerns aside and curl myself up in the cocoon of somebody else's imagination. My life was suspended - I was in neither one place nor the other.

—Kate Kerrigan

People shock me when they say they never read. When I was young, if people didn't read they would never admit it. Now, it's quite acceptable to be anti-intellectual.

—Joan Vass

I read books in the library, huddling on a bean bag in a corner and getting lost in somebody else's victories and troubles. I never had much time for fiction before. I preferred real life. Mathematics. Solutions. Things that actually have a bearing on my life. But I can understand now why people read, why they like to get lost in somebody else's life. Sometimes I'll read a sentence and it will make me sit up, jolt me, because it is something that I have recently felt but never said out loud. I want to reach into the page and tell the characters that I understand them, that they are not alone, that I'm not alone, that it's okay to feel like this. And then the lunch bell rings the book closes and I'm plunged back into reality.

—Cecelia Ahern

As many as six out of ten American adults have never read a book of any kind, and the bulletins from the nation's educational frontiers read like the casualty reports from a lost war.

—Lewis H. Lapham

People don't read any more. It's a sad state of affairs. Reading's the only thing that allows you to use your imagination. When you watch films it's someone else's vision, isn't it?

—Lemmy Kilmister

The taste for books was an early one. As a child he was sometimes found at midnight by a page still reading. They took his taper away, and he bred glow-worms to serve his purpose. They took the glow-worms away and he almost burnt the house down with a tinder.

—Virginia Woolf

My daughter is seven, and some of the other second-grade parents complain that their children don't read for pleasure. When I visit their homes, the children's rooms are crammed with expensive books, but the parent's rooms are empty. Those children do not see their parents reading, as I did every day of my childhood. By contrast, when I walk into an apartment with books on the shelves, books on the bedside tables, books on the floor, and books on the toilet tank, then I know what I would see if I opened the door that says 'PRIVATE--GROWNUPS KEEP OUT': a child sprawled on the bed, reading.

—Anne Fadiman

No matter how busy you may think you are, you must find time for reading, or surrender yourself to self-chosen ignorance.

—Confucius

Fact 1: Reading can make you a better conversationalist.

Fact 2: Neighbours will never complain that you are reading too loud.

Fact 3: Knowledge by osmosis has to yet been perfected, so you'd better read.

Fact 4: Books have stopped bullets. Reading could save your life.

Fact 5: Dinosaurs did not read. Look what happened to them.

—*fandomlife-universe*

I read where I can, but I have a favorite place and probably you do, too—a place where the light is good and the vibe is usually strong. For me it's the blue chair in my study. For you it might be the couch on the sunporch, the rocker in the kitchen, or maybe it's propped up in your bed—reading in bed can be heaven, assuming you can get just the right amount of light on the page and aren't prone to spilling your coffee or cognac on the sheets.

—Stephen King

Bookmark? You mean quitter strip?

—Unknown

Don't ask who's influenced me. A lion is made up of the lambs he's digested, and I've been reading all my life.

—Giorgos Seferis

Always read stuff that will make you look good if you die in the middle of the night.

--P. J. O'Rourke

Have you ever rightly considered what the mere ability to read means? That is the key which admits us to the whole world of thought and fancy and imagination? To the company of saint and sage, of the wisest and the wittiest at their wisest and wittiest moment? That it enables us to see with the keenest eyes, hear with the finest ears, and listen to the sweetest voice of all times?

--James Russell Lowell

Boys will be boys; girls will read books....from an early age, boys are discouraged by society to read; when they do pick up a novel, they prefer its subject be 'disgusting,' humorous, and short. Furthermore, boys tend to read books with a male protagonist, while girls will read a broader sampling of viewpoints.

--Francine Prose

There's something special about people who are interested in the printed word. They are a species all their own—learned, kind, knowledgeable and human.

--Nathan Pine

The public which reads, in any sense of the word worth considering, is very, very small; the public which would feel no lack if all bookprinting ceased tomorrow is enormous.

--George Gissing

A bookworm in bed with a new novel and a good reading lamp is as much prepared for pleasure as a pretty girl at a college dance.

--Phyllis McGinley

Almost nothing in our culture encourages the private moment of reading.

--Elizabeth Sifton

But reading *is* important. It is especially important to children. It is the key which unlocks the gates of formal education, the means by which the wisdom of the past and the technology of the present are made available. But it can do much more. Through reading, a child may live another's life for a few hours. He becomes Huck Finn and wrestles with the problem of laws that destroy freedom; or he is Johnny Tremain and learns in the time of the American Revolution how adversity may be put to good use....By learning to identify with others, to suffer or to rejoice as he encounters tragedy or joy, he can develop a sense of empathy towards the life around him—his fellow companions as well as the creatures of the world he inhabits.

--Scott O'Dell

If I am at all partial, it is to the man who reads rapidly. One of the silliest couplets ever composed is to be found in 'The Art of Reading,' by one William Walker, a seventeenth-century hollowhead who wrote:

Learn to read slow; all other graces  
Will follow in their proper places.

This is unmitigated balderdash and if taken seriously can easily result in the wasting of ten or fifteen per cent of the few waking hours God has put at our disposal.

--Clifton Fadiman

Never read a book through merely because you have begun it.

--John Witherspoon

The end of reading is not more books but more life.

--Holbrook Jackson

To read without reflecting is like eating without digesting.

--Edmund Burke

Some people read because they are too lazy to think.

--G. C. Lichtenberg

We live in an age that reads too much to be wise.

--Oscar Wilde

A man is known by the company his mind keeps.

--Thomas Bailey Aldrich

I have never known any distress that an hour of reading did not relieve.

--Montesquieu

People say that life is the thing, but I prefer reading.

--Logan Pearsall Smith

A man ought to read just as inclination leads him, for what he reads as a task will do him little good.

--Samuel Johnson

My early and invincible love of reading, I would not exchange for all the riches of India.

—Edward Gibbon

Where there is leisure for fiction there is little grief.

--Samuel Johnson

There is a great deal of difference between the eager man who wants to read a book, and the tired man who wants a book to read.

--G. K. Chesterton

The use of books for pleasure is the most satisfactory recreation; without having acquired the power of reading for pleasure, none of us can be independent.

--Viscount Grey

In science, read by preference the newest works; in literature, the oldest. The classics are always modern.

--Edward Bulwer-Lytton

Life being short and the quiet hours of it few, we ought to waste none of them in reading valueless books.

--John Ruskin

A few books thoroughly digested, rather than hundreds but gargled in the mouth.

--Francis Osborne

He that loves reading, has everything within his reach. He has but to desire, and he may possess himself of every species of wisdom to judge and power to perform.

--William Godwin

Have you ever rightly considered what the mere ability to read means? That it is the key which admits us to the whole world of thought and fancy and imagination? to the company of saint and sage, of the wisest and the wittiest at their wisest and wittiest moment? That it enables us to see with the keenest eyes, hear with the finest ears, and listen to the sweetest voices of all time?

--J. R. Lowell

Choose an author as you choose a friend.

--Earl of Roscommon

Live always in the best company when you read.

--Rev. Sydney Smith

Do not read, as children do, to amuse yourself, or like the ambitious, for the purpose of instruction. No, read in order to live.

--Gustave Flaubert

Reading is sometimes an ingenious device for avoiding thought.

--Sir Arthur Helps

There are some people who read too much: the bibliobibuli. I know some who are constantly drunk on books, as other men are drunk on whiskey or religion. They wander through this most diverting and stimulating of worlds in a haze, seeing nothing and hearing nothing.

--Henry Louis Mencken

Books must be read as deliberately and reservedly as they are written.

--Henry David Thoreau

To rede, and drive the night away.

--Geoffrey Chaucer

It is curious how tyrannical the habit of reading is, and what shifts we make to escape thinking. There is no bore we dread being left alone with so much as our own minds.

--James Russell Lowell

Read the best books first, or you may not have a chance to read them at all.

--Henry David Thoreau

When we read wisely, we are always in the process of becoming.

--Dayton Kohler

Reading makes us citizens of the world at large.

--Dayton Kohler

We should read our books as we eat a good dinner, with appreciation and zest, not take them in prescribed doses, like a tonic.

--Dayton Kohler

Reading for pleasure is an exercise which enables us to live with our whole bodies as well as our minds.

--Dayton Kohler

The most important person in a schoolwide literacy effort is the principal. 'Without administrators, you're not going to get very far,' says Richard Sterling, executive director of the National Writing Project. 'Reforms are going to be confined to single classrooms.'

—Rebecca Jones

To read a book well, one should read it as if one were writing it. Begin not by sitting on the bench among the judges but by standing in the dock with the criminal. Be his fellow worker, become his accomplice....But now, when the book is finished, the reader must leave the dock and mount the bench. He must cease to be the friend; he must become the judge....Every book...has the right to be judged by the best of its kind.

--Virginia Woolf

Master books, but do not let them master you. Read to live, not live to read.

--Edward Bulwer-Lytton



The process of reading encourages rationality. A printed page, containing a narrative or argument that unfolds line by line, encourages a more coherent view of the world than does a slam-bang broadcast of quickly changing, high impact images—floods, fire, terrorism, a congressional hearing, now off to a denture-adhesive commercial, now back to war, the stock market, etc. Reading is active; it requires the discipline of bodily stillness and mental attention. Absorbing television is an essentially passive experience. Were broadcasting to supplant rather than just supplement print, much—civilization in fact—would be lost. But were television to vanish, the people who today read almost nothing would still read almost nothing.

--George Will

Read what you like, because you like it, seeking no other reason and no other profit than the experience of reading.

--Holbrook Jackson

In school we learn one of the most amazing and difficult feats man has ever accomplished—*how to read*—and at the same time we learn to hate to read the things worth reading most.

--Steve Allen

Reading is a very private affair and that's why TV will never replace it! I have so much I want to read and reread that I want to select what fills my own emotional needs, needs which are often different from or unknown to even my closest friends.

--Charlotte Zolotow

The process of reading encourages rationality .

--Neil Postman

Ordinary people know little of the time and effort it takes to learn to read. I have been eighty years at it, and have not reached my goal.

--Johann von Goethe

Reading is the work of the alert mind, is demanding, and under ideal conditions produces finally a sort of ecstasy. This gives the experience of reading a sublimity and power unequaled by any other form of communication.

--E. B. White

My education was the liberty I had to read indiscriminately and all the time, with my eyes hanging out.

--Dylan Thomas

Be as careful of the books you read, as of the company you keep; for your habits and character will be as much influenced by the former as by the latter.

--Paxton Hood

The book to read is not the one which thinks for you, but the one which makes you think.

--James McCosh

Let children read whatever they want and then talk about it with them. If parents and kids can talk together, we won't have as much censorship because we won't have as much fear.

--Judy Blume

Resolve to edge in a little reading every day, if it is but a single sentence. If you gain fifteen minutes a day, it will make itself felt at the end of the year.

--Horace Mann

Reading, after a certain age, diverts the mind too much from its creative pursuits. Any man who reads too much and uses his own brain too little falls into lazy habits of thinking.

--Albert Einstein

Let us read with method, and propose to ourselves an end to which our studies may point. The use of reading is to aid us in thinking.

--Edward Gibbon

Solitary reading will enable a man to stuff himself with information, but without conversation his mind will become like a pond without an outlet—a mass of unhealthy stagnature. It is not enough to harvest knowledge by study; the wind of talk must winnow it and blow away the chaff. Then will the clear, bright grains of wisdom be garnered, for our own use or that of others.

--William Matthew

If you would know what nobody knows, read what everybody reads, just one year afterwards.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

With half an hour's reading in bed every night as a steady practice, the busiest man can get a fair education before the plasma sets in the periganglionic spaces of his grey cortex.

--Sir William Osler

In the reading process, meaning is produced as information from the text interacts with knowledge possessed by the reader. Again and again, research on the reading process has documented the importance of shared knowledge, background knowledge, and prior knowledge to reading comprehension.

—Jean Osborn

They who have read about everything are thought to understand everything, too, but it is not always so; reading furnishes the mind only with materials of knowledge; it is thinking that makes what we read ours. We are of the ruminating kind, and it is not enough to cram ourselves with a great load of collections—we must chew them over again.

—John Locke

The light of the sun, the day, and life itself, would be joyless and bitter if I had not something to read.

--Leo Allatius

Culture is reading with a purpose to guide it and with a system.

--Matthew Arnold

A man's life each day depends for its solidity and value on whether he reads during that day, and, far more still, on what he reads during it.

--Matthew Arnold

Do you want to get at new ideas? Read old books; do you want to find old ideas? Read new ones.

--Edward Bulwer-Lytton

Much reading is like much eating, wholly useless without digestion.

--Robert South

It does not matter what one reads—favorite authors, particular themes—as long as we read something. It is not even important to own the books.

--Helen Simonson

Let sleep go. Let the morrow's duties go. Let health, prudence, and honour go. The bedside book for me is the book that will longest keep me awake.

--J. C. Squires

The reading animal will not be content with the brutish wallowings that satisfy the unlearned pigs of the world.

--Tom Hood

I would rather be a poor man in a garret with plenty of books than a king who did not love reading.

--Thomas Babington  
Macaulay

All that a university or final highest school can do for us, is still what the first school began doing—teach us to read.

--Thomas Carlyle

Reading is sometimes an ingenious device for drugging thought.

--Sir Arthur Helps

In all reading instruction the first aim should be to produce children who want to read and who do read; the second aim should be to help them to read effectively. If the second aim is given priority, it is probable that the first aim will never be achieved.

--Carl Anderson

Time spent reading is...never, under and circumstances, time wasted, provided that what we're reading is worthwhile.

--Michael Korda

Anybody who can read, can *learn*.

--Michael Korda

It always takes two imaginations to bring a novel to life.

--Joan Dial

When I was a child, I was often told not to spend so much time sitting by myself with a book. How would I learn anything about life, I was warned, if I spent it reading? As a child, I took these warnings seriously though I managed to keep on doing just what I wanted to do much of the time. But now, decades later, I can see that the advice was wrong. I learned far more about life from reading books than I would have from playing in the park or tossing a ball around with other children.

--Michael Korda

## THE NONREADER

The boy I saw was seventeen.  
He laughed; he talked  
He seemed to see,  
And yet he could not read.  
So deprived was he  
That all the world seemed flat and stale.

He came for help  
To see as others see,  
To find the splendor  
That is there in print.

What to do with such as he?  
If we but stop and think  
And love and Care,  
We find the way.  
To read, this boy must also love—  
Himself, the book, the world.

--Virginia Svagr

What we require of a child's reading, at any level above that of keeping him quiet, is that it should stretch his imagination, extend his experience, give him some new awareness of people and the world around him.

--John Rowe Townsend

Children who garner an abundance of truth from the books they read may some day turn on the lights that will illumine the darkness creeping over the earth.

--Rebecca Caudill

A child's dreams blueprint his future, and it's a wise child whose instincts (unwarped by ignorant elders) lead him to fill his dreamhouse with the riches of idea and emotion that the great books offer. He must also be allowed to accomplish this enrichment at his own convenience and without having to summarize his findings on a report card.

--T. Morris Longstreth

After three days without reading, talk becomes flavorless.

--Chinese Proverb

Reading informs the intellect, but its chief use is to counsel the heart and release the greatness which will remain dormant until touched by similar greatness. Any-one in his early teens who shared the exploits of King Arthur's knights knows that the heart leads. A child feels, loves, or disdains long before he understands.

--T. Morris Longstreth

Somebody who reads only newspapers and at best books of contemporary authors looks to me like an extremely near-sighted person who scorns eyeglasses. He is completely dependent on the prejudices and fashions of his times, since he never gets to see or hear anything else. And what a person thinks on his own without being stimulated by the thoughts and experience of other people is even in the best case rather paltry and monotonous.

--Albert Einstein

Fortunate is that child who has been magic-carpeted out of the world of realism. It has been noted that the plethora of facts learned in school today will be obsolete in less than 10 years. So perhaps the most important thing a child can learn is how to stretch his imagination into untouched realms of thought. Eternal truths shine in fresh radiance through the magic of fantasy.

--Marjorie D. Hamlin

The reader who develops early the habit of exploring in all sorts of directions and looking for the unexpected should be rewarded his whole life through by finding that his day-to-day experience and his changing interests extend his enjoyment of literature, which in turn enhances his pleasure in life.

--Elizabeth Alden Green

We hear a lot these days of our being at the cultural mercy of the movies, radio and TV; that we are in a mind-bath of evanescent, visual-aural influences; and that the studied, Gutenberg reading line is passing from the scene. From the variety of expressions of experience and the individuation of language and style, it could be argued that these writers are less affected by mass electronic media than Marshall McLuhan might imagine. Writing and reading are still going on, especially in the colleges, and it looks as if such activities will continue.

--Whit and Hallie  
Burnett

No two readers get exactly the same thoughts and feelings from something they read, because their past experiences have been different.

--Edward H. Jones, Jr.

Reading is not automatically a maker of men and women, of mature citizens who are responsive to each other and to aspirations of humanity.

Twenty-three million American adults are totally or functionally illiterate.

--U.S. Department of  
Education

A child keeps reading a book because he likes the people in the story and the writing. He enjoys spending the time with the people he is reading about.

--Richard Jackson

What the mass audience does desire, apparently, is escape from the conditions that make it a mass audience—namely the dullness, grind and anxiety imposed by an industrial society on the masses that sustain it. The mass literacy that is one of the products of industrialism operates on a mainly utilitarian level. Language must denote rather than connote. It must be tied to simple referents. In other words, it must not be literary.

--Anthony Burgess

I have often reflected upon the new vistas that reading opened to me. I knew right there in prison that reading had changed forever the course of my life. As I see it today, the ability to read awoke inside me some long dormant craving to be mentally alive.

--Malcolm X

Nowhere is our obsession with timetables more needless and foolish than in reading. We make much too much of the difficulties of learning to read. Teachers may say, 'But reading must be difficult, or so many children wouldn't have trouble with it.' I say it is *because* we assume that it is so difficult that so many children have trouble with it. Our anxieties, our fears, and the ridiculous things we do to 'simplify' what is simple enough already, *cause* most of the trouble.

--John Holt

As a rule reading fiction is as hard to me as trying to hit a target by hurling feathers at it. I need *resistance*, to cerebrate!

--William James

Let not the authority of the writer offend thee whether he be of great or small learning; but let the love of pure truth draw thee to read.

--Thomas a Kempis

Force yourself to reflect on what you read, paragraph by paragraph.

--Samuel Taylor  
Coleridge

Be sure that you go to the author to get at *his* meaning, not to find yours.

--John Ruskin

We must form our minds by reading deep rather than wide.

--Marcus Fabius  
Quintilianus

Culture is reading.

--Matthew Arnold

No man, however learned, can be called a cultured man while there remains an unbridged gap between his reading and his life.

--J. C. Powys

Much reading is an oppression of the mind, and extinguishes the natural candle, which is the reason of so many senseless scholars in the world.

--William Penn

Readers of fiction are forcibly dispossessed of a will of their own, and are made to think and feel whatever the writer commands. The characters in a novel are ten thousand times freer than their readers. Characters are often known to mutiny against the writer by taking charge of their books; readers, never. Either readers are docile in succumbing to the responses prescribed for them, or else the book uncompromisingly closes its gates and shuts them out. In either case the writer is master.

--Cynthia Ozick

Reading skills are very important. That's how you find out what's going to be on T.V.

--Unknown

The pleasure of all reading is doubled when one lives with another who shares the same books.

--Katherine Mansfield



The best effect of any book is that it excites the reader to self-activity.

--Thomas Carlyle

When we read too fast or too slowly, we understand nothing.

--Blaise Pascal

Most people want the totality of the reading experience. They want to be entertained, diverted. They read for relaxation and for fun, and a lot of these same people also read to learn, read to be moved, read to be transformed—some books do change lives.

--Al Silverman

Of all the amusements of old age, the most grateful and soothing is a renewal of acquaintance with the favorite studies and favorite authors of youth.

--Adam Smith

Trevelyan

He that reads and grows no wiser seldom suspects his own deficiency, but complains of hard words and obscure sentences, and asks why books are written which cannot be understood.

--Samuel Johnson

Reading is the work of the alert mind, is demanding, and under ideal conditions produces finally a sort of ecstasy. This gives the experience of reading a sublimity and power unequalled by any other form of communication.

--E. B. White

Books give not wisdom where none was before. But where some is, there reading makes it more.

--John Harington

Reading, we must remember, is a process of getting meaning from the printed page by putting meaning into the printed page. Reading taste and ability are always tethered to past experience. But reading itself is one way of increasing this capital fund of past experience. Reading, therefore, just be seen as more than *saying* the word, more than *seeing* the sentences and paragraphs. Good reading is the way a person brings his whole life to bear on the new ideas which he finds on the printed page. It is reading the lines, reading between the lines, and reading beyond the lines. It is active, not a passive, process. The good reader becomes involved with the writing and the writer.

--Edgar Dale

What condition of man most deserves pity? A lonesome man on a rainy day who does not know how to read.

--Benjamin Franklin

If you can read, but don't, you're a little like the people who go around with their hearing aids turned off. You'll avoid the boring stuff, but you'll also miss the news that somebody loves you or your pants are on fire.

--Katharine Stall

How scary and wonderful it is that words can change our lives simply by being next to each other.

—Kamand Kojouri

The influence of early books is profound. So much of the future lies on the shelves. Early reading has more influence on the conduct than any religious training.

--Graham Greene

Reading without sharing is like watching a circus without saying anything...Like a commercial without a TV program...Like a frame without a picture...Like describing a spiral staircase without using your hands.

--Nancy Whitelaw

The man who is 'too busy to read' is never likely to lead.

—B. C. Forbes

People cannot become truly knowledgeable without being excellent readers. While multimedia systems can use video and sound to deliver information in compelling ways, text is still one of the very best ways to convey details.

--Bill Gates

I try to make time for reading each night. In addition to the usual newspapers and magazines, I make it a priority to read at least one newsweekly from cover to cover. If I were to read only what intrigues me—say, the science and business sections—then I would finish the magazine the same person I was when I started. So I read it all.

--Bill Gates

No entertainment is so cheap as reading, nor any pleasure so lasting.

--Mary Wortley Montagu

There are four kinds of readers. The first is like an hourglass; and their reading being as sand, it runs out, and leaves not a vestige behind.

A second is like the sponge, which imbibes everything, and returns it in nearly the same state, only a little dirtier.

A third is like a jelly bag, allowing all that is pure to pass away, and retaining only the refuse and dregs.

And the fourth is like the slaves in the diamond mines of Golanda, who, casting aside all that is worthless, retain only pure gems.

--Samuel Taylor  
Coleridge

To acquire the habit of reading is to construct for yourself a refuge from almost all the miseries of life.

--W. Somerset Maugham

The way a book is read—which is to say, the qualities a reader brings to a book—can have as much to do with its worth as anything the author puts into it...Anyone who can read can learn how to read deeply and thus live more fully.

--Norman Cousins

I divide all readers into two classes: Those who read to remember and those who read to forget.

--William Phelps

Reading is the best medicine for a sick man, the best music for a sad man, the best counsel for a desperate man, the best comfort for one afflicted.

--John Florio

Reading furnishes the mind only with the materials of knowledge; it is thinking makes what we read ours.

--John Locke

In a very real sense, people who have read good literature have lived more than people who cannot or will not read...It is not true that we have only one life to live; if we can read, we can live as many more lives and as many kinds of lives as we wish.

--S. I. Hayakawa

I have often wondered about two things. First, why high school kids almost invariably hate the books they are assigned to read by their English teachers, and second, why English teachers almost invariably hate the books students read in their spare time. Something seems very wrong with such a situation. There is a bridge out here, and the ferry service is uncertain at best.

--Stephen King

It is only by the love of reading that the evil resulting from the association with little minds can be counteracted.

--Elizabeth Hamilton

A page digested is better than a volume hurriedly read.

--Thomas Macaulay

The whole world opened to me when I learned to read.

--Mary McLeod Bethune

Publishers often view boys as raging, non-reading Ids, while girls are the refined Ego. Characters in boys' books wear running shoes and boots. Characters in girls' books wear slippers. All agreed, however, that both boys and girls want happy endings—no books where the dog dies.

--Richard Jackson

Reading is like permitting a man to talk a long time, and refusing you the right to answer.

--Ed Howe

Reading is a basic tool in the living of a good life.

--Mortimer J. Adler

The love of reading enables a person to exchange the wearisome hours of life, which come to everyone, for hours of delight.

--Montesquieu

The counsellor who never reads a novel or never opens a book of poetry is neglecting an important resource for empathic development.

—Dave Mearns

If we could get our parents to read to their preschool children fifteen minutes a day, we could revolutionize the schools.

--Dr. Ruth Love

If, as you read,  
Your soul is stirred  
To ecstasy  
By printed word;  
If, on the page  
You see the glow  
Of flower and sea  
And crystal snow;  
If sting and stab  
Of wind and rain  
Beat on your heart  
With poignant pain;  
If what is unrevealed  
Lies bare  
Through subtle word  
Or feeling there—  
No loneliness, no want  
Can touch  
Your soul. You have  
Been given much.

--Katherine Edelman

1. The more you read, the more you know;
2. the more you know, the smarter you grow;
3. the smarter you are, the longer you stay in school and the more diplomas you earn;
4. the more diplomas you have, the more days you are employed;
5. the more diplomas you have, the more your children will achieve in school;
6. and the more diplomas you have, the longer you will live.

The converse, therefore, would also be true:

1. The less you read, the less you know;
2. the less you know, the sooner you drop out of school;
3. the sooner you drop out, the sooner and longer you will be unemployed;
4. the sooner you drop out, the greater your chances of going to jail.

--Jim Trelease

One of the most heartbreaking sights in American schools today is that of children—once so eager to read—discovering that they are not learning how.

There comes over those sparkling eyes a glaze of listless despair. We are not talking about a few children and scattered schools. We are talking about millions of children and every school in the nation.

And the toll in young spirits is the least of it. The toll in learning and thinking potential of our citizenry is beyond measure.

--Sylvia  
Farnham-Diggory

Principals who serve as the instructional leaders in their schools must ensure that their teachers are using the most effective methods and materials for teaching all students to read. The notion that children who are poor or disadvantaged, who come to school 'less ready' than their peers, or who have uninvolved parents cannot learn to read is wrong.

--Ian Hasbrouck

Children are wired for sound, but print is an optional accessory that must be painstakingly bolted on.

--Steven Pinker

We have been so preoccupied with trying to find out how to teach everybody to read anything that we have forgotten the importance of what is read. Yet it is obvious that if we succeeded in teaching everybody to read, and everybody read nothing but pulp magazines, obscene literature, and *Mein Kampf*, the last state of the nation would be worse than the first. Literacy is not enough.

--Robert Maynard  
Hutchins

Decoding and comprehension...are the two halves of reading. But the two halves are not added together. Reading does not equal the sum of decoding and comprehension, for neither decoding in the absence of comprehension, nor comprehension in the absence of decoding, leads to any amount of reading. A child who cannot decode cannot read; a child who cannot comprehend cannot read either. Literacy—reading ability—can be found only in the presence of both decoding and comprehension. Both skills are necessary; neither is sufficient.

--Philip Gough, Wesley  
Hoover, and  
Cynthia Peterson

The more elements of good parenting, good teaching, and good schooling children experience, the greater the likelihood that they will achieve their potential as readers.

--*Becoming a Nation of Readers*

You may have tangible worth untold,  
Caskets of jewels and coffers of gold,  
Richer than I you can never be,  
I had a mother who read to me.

--Strickland Gillian

Read as you taste fruit or savor wine, or enjoy friendship, love, or life.

--Holbrook Jackson

If I couldn't read, I couldn't live.

--Thelma Green

I have read only one book in my life, and that is *White Fang*. It's so frightfully good I've never bothered to read another.

--Nancy Mitford

All you have to do to educate a child is leave him alone and teach him to read. The rest is brainwashing.

--Ellen Gilchrist

When we read a story, we inhabit it.

--John Berger

The failure to read good books both enfeebles the vision and strengthens our most fatal tendency—the belief that here and now is all there is.

--Allan Bloom

The unread story is not a story; it is little black marks on wood pulp. The reader, reading it, makes it live.

--Ursula K. LeGuin

The many books he read but served to whet his unrest. Every page of every book was a peep-hole into the realm of knowledge. His hunger fed upon what he read, and increased.

--Jack London

To be well informed, one must read quickly a great number of merely instructive books. To be cultivated, one must read slowly and with a lingering appreciation the comparatively few books that have been written by men who lived, thought, and felt with style.

--Aldous Huxley

Reading makes immigrants of us all—it takes us away from home, but more important, it finds homes for us everywhere.

--Hazel Rochman

No reading should be compulsory.

--Julian Barnes

Men do not understand BOOKS until they have had a certain amount of life.

--Ezra Pound

In reading, one should notice and fondle details.

--Vladimir Nabokov

I've never known any troubles that an hour's reading didn't assuage.

--Charles

De Montesquieu

'Tis the good reader that makes the good book; in every book he finds passages which seem confidences or asides hidden from all else and unmistakably meant for his ear; the profit of books is according to the sensibility of the reader; the profoundest thought or passion sleeps as in a mine, until it is discovered by an equal mind and heart.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

One of the joys of reading is the ability to plug into the shared wisdom of mankind.

--Ishmael Reed

The habit of reading is the only one I know in which there is no alloy. It lasts when all other pleasures fade. It will be there to support you when all other resources are gone. It will be present to you when the energies of your body have fallen away from you. It will make your hours pleasant to you as long as you live.

--Anthony Trollope



If we can read we can live . . . as many kinds of lives as we wish.

--S. I. Hayakawa

I will change the world one child at a time. I will give a child a gift that lasts forever, a gift of reading. I will open eyes and ignite dreams with stories that make children feel, grow, and think. Nothing will stop me, because my heart knows the power of reading.

--*Scott Foresman  
Company*

Thou mayest as well expect to grow stronger by always eating, as wiser by always reading. Too much overcharges Nature, and turns more into disease than nourishment. 'Tis thought and digestion which make books serviceable, and give health and vigor to the mind.

--Richard Buckminster  
Fuller

Open George Eliot's *Middlemarch* or William Makepeace Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, two hefty examples of 19th Century literature at its finest....You can't read the book. Your mind, earnest and dutiful, will stick with the task for a clause or two, but somewhere after the fourth semicolon, just shy of the sixth 'moreover' or 'henceforth,' it will happen: Your mind, like a friendly pup, will bolt from the path and go nosing off to those interesting places in the distance where there's light and noise and fun, tripping over tis paws, deliriously happy at having slipped the surly bonds of a long, long, *long* sentence....We don't read like we used to—and we probably can't. No matter how much we try, we can't seem to bring the necessary level of concentration to bear upon printed matter of any depth or complexity. Because of MTV or VH1, because of the Internet, because of cell phones or satellite pagers—pick your favorite hectoring doodad, since any or all may be responsible—we are no longer able to clear out the physical, psychological or intellectual space to grapple with sophisticated printed matter....

We may be reaching a critical point in human history: the moment after which no one is actually able to read anything written before 1900....There seems to be, simmering within us like various ingredients interacting in a witch's cauldron, an inability to focus long and hard....those big, grand 19th Century novels...might as well be written in a foreign language, so inaccessibly remote have they become to 21st Century sensibilities.

--Julia Keller

Happy is he who has laid up in his youth, and held fast in all fortune, a genuine and passionate love for reading.

--Rufus Choate

Today a reader, tomorrow a leader.

--W. Fusselman

Were I to pray for a taste which should stand me in good stead under every variety of circumstances and be a source of happiness and a cheerfulness to me during life and a shield against its ills, however things might go amiss and the world frown upon me, it would be a taste for reading.

--Sir John Herschel

If learning to read was as easy as learning to talk, as some writers claim, many more children would learn to read on their own. The fact that they do not, despite their being surrounded by print, suggests that learning to read is not a spontaneous or simple skill.

--David Elkind

You become a reader because you saw and heard someone you admired enjoying the experience, someone led you to the world of books even before you could read, let you taste the magic of stories, took you to the library, and allowed you to stay up later at night to read in bed.

--Jim Trelease

I never desire to converse with a man who has written more than he has read.

--Samuel Johnson

I read my eyes out and can't read half enough....The more one reads the more one sees we have to read.

--John Adams

Reading—It is not a spectator sport but a performing art.

--Peter S. Prescott

People are used to reading in blocks, and the idea that one sentence has any meaning, as opposed to a paragraph, escapes them.

--Gore Vidal

Most reading is no more cultural or intellectual or imaginative than shooting pool or watching 'What's My Line.'

--Donald Hall

Until I feared I would lose it, I never loved to read. One does not love breathing.  
--Harper Lee

Properly, we should read for power. Man reading should be man intensely alive.  
The book should be a ball of light in one's hand.  
--Ezra Pound

To live in a world of readers creates a hunger to belong, and that hunger motivates learning. To see the power of books work on others is to want that power oneself.  
--Peter Temes

First and foremost, we must remind teachers that they are not only teaching how to read, but why to read. They must find ways to share wonder along with linguistic correctness, or else we will raise a generation of students who can read, but will too often choose not to.  
--Peter Temes

The finest words in the world are only vain sounds, if you cannot comprehend them.  
--Anatole France

Today, library and bookstore shelves teem with a dizzying array of picture books: concept books, stories, fiction, nonfiction, poetry—even toy books that a child can pat, feel, push, or pull. Picture books connect the visual, sensory world of the pre-reading child to the more structured world of words and language. They stimulate children's imaginations, introduce them to the idea of beginnings, middles, and ends, make them aware of others, and make them surer of knowledge about themselves.  
--Stephanie Loer

The research is clear. Students who read 1 million words a year every year will develop fluency in their reading. And fluency is critical to comprehension. We learn most of the words we know through reading.  
--Sally Mentor Hay

Educators often consider recreational reading to be an effective method of connecting to students' emotional and developmental needs. This 'warm and fuzzy' conception of reading has been recently overshadowed by the realization that recreational reading has a number of other benefits. For example, time spent reading correlates with academic success, vocabulary development, standardized-test performance, improved attitudes toward additional reading and the development of world knowledge.  
--Thomas W. Bean

The mind grows by what it feeds on.

--J. G. Holland

Startling as this may sound, the truth is that many children read for a remarkably small percentage of the school day...children sometimes spend two and a half hours a day in reading instruction and only ten minutes of that time actually reading.

--Lucy McCormick  
Calkins

Underdeveloped literacy skills are the number one reason why students are retained, assigned to special education, given long-term remedial services, and why they fail to graduate from high school.

--Vincent Ferrandino and  
Gerald Tirozzi

Readers are plentiful: thinkers are rare.

--Anthony Burgess

A man only learns in two ways, one by reading, and the other by association with smarter people.

--Will Rogers

When I look back, I am so impressed again with the life-giving power of literature. If I were a young person today, trying to gain a sense of myself in the world, I would do that again by reading, just as I did when I was young.

--Maya Angelou

It is not enough to simply teach children to read; we have to give them something worth reading. Something that will stretch their imagination—something that will help them make sense of their own lives and encourage them to reach out toward people whose lives are quite different from their own.

--Katherine Patterson

By teaching a child to read, we change the world.

--Donald J. Leu

The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go.

--Dr. Seuss

A country so rich that it can send people to the moon still has hundreds of thousands of its citizens who can't read. That's terribly troubling to me.

--Charles Kuralt

When I'm reading, I'm thinking about something else. I'm certainly not worrying about that job letter I just sent out, or who I have to call, or how I am going to pay the electric bill.

--Katherine Petersen

One trouble with developing speed reading skills is that by the time you realize a book is boring you've already finished it.

--Franklin P. Jones

There is nothing like a banned book to turn a teenager into a devoted reader.

--Malcolm Jones

Japan, Germany, and India seem to me to have serious writers, readers, and book buyers, but the Netherlands has struck me as the most robust literary culture in the world.

--Paul Theroux

A writer only begins a book. A reader finishes it.

--Samuel Johnson

It is clear that users are not reading online in the traditional sense; indeed there are signs that new forms of 'reading' are emerging as users 'power browse' horizontally through titles, contents, pages and abstracts going for quick wins. It almost seems that they go online to avoid reading in the traditional sense.

--Researchers from the  
University College,  
London

We are not only *what* we read. We are *how* we read. The style of reading promoted by the Net, a style that puts efficiency and immediacy above all else, may be weakening our capacity for the kind of deep reading that emerged when an earlier technology, the printing press, made long and complex works of prose commonplace. When we read online, we tend to become mere decoders of information. Our ability to interpret text, to make the rich mental connections that form when we read deeply and without distraction, remains largely disengaged.

--Maryanne Wolf

Reading is not an instinctive skill for human beings. It's not etched into our genes the way speech is. We have to teach our minds how to translate the symbolic characters we see into the language we understand

--Maryanne Wolf

The kind of deep reading that a sequence of printed pages promotes is valuable not just for the knowledge we acquire from the author's words but for the intellectual vibrations those words set off within our own minds. In the quiet spaces opened up by the sustained, undistracted reading of a book, or by any other act of contemplation, for that matter, we make our own associations, draw our own inferences and analogies, foster our own ideas. Deep reading is indistinguishable from deep thinking.

--Nicholas Carr

Let the Lessons for Reading be varied, that the youth may be made acquainted with good Stiles of all Kinds in Prose and Verse, and the proper Manner of reading each Kind. Sometimes a well told Story, a Piece of a Sermon, a General's Speech to his Soldiers, a Speech in a Tragedy, some Part of a Comedy, an Ode....But let such Lessons for Reading be chosen, as contain some useful Instruction, whereby the Understandings or Morals of the Youth, may at the same Time be improv'd.

--Benjamin Franklin

When by these gentle ways (a child) begins to be able to read, some easy pleasant book, suited to his capacity, should be put into his hands, wherein the entertainment that he finds, might draw him on, and reward his pains in reading; and yet not such as should fill his head with perfectly useless trumpery, or lay the principles of vice and folly. To this purpose I think *Aesop's Fables* the best, which being stories apt to delight and entertain a child, may yet afford useful reflections to a grown man; and if his memory retain them all his life after, he will not repent to find them there, amongst his manly thoughts, and serious business.

--John Locke

...their grave eyes reflected the eternal fascination of the fairy tale: Would the monster be bested...or would he feed?

--Stephen King

You don't need a young athletic body or piles of money to read some of the world's great books.

--Roseanne Barr

A child's reading is guided by pleasure, but his pleasure is undifferentiated.

—W. H. Auden

A good sentence is a key. It unlocks the mind of the reader.

--Eric Hoffer

Literature and the reading life is a pursuit which devours a great deal of time, and yet is apt to leave behind it nothing very substantial.

--Virginia Woolf

The common reader differs from the critic and the scholar. He is worse educated, and nature has not gifted him so generously. He reads for his own pleasure rather than to impart knowledge or correct the opinions of others. Above all, he is guided by an instinct to create for himself, out of whatever odds and ends he can come by, some kind of whole—a portrait of a man, a sketch of an age, a theory of the art of writing.

--Virginia Woolf

A reader must check the desire for learning at the outset; if knowledge sticks to him well and good, but to go in pursuit of it, to read on a system, to become a specialist or an authority, is very apt to kill...the more humane passion for pure and disinterested reading. The true reader is a man of intense curiosity; of ideas; open-minded and communicative, to whom reading is more of the nature of brisk exercise in the open air than of sheltered study.

--Virginia Woolf

In 1857 the printed word was unopposed. Books and magazines were a necessity for the thoughtful, and reading aloud was an evening pastime.

--James Bennet

Writing and reading is to me synonymous with existing.

--Gertrude Stein

The debate about homework should not be ‘how much?’ but ‘what kind?’ and ‘what for?’ Using homework merely to cover material there was no time for in class is less helpful, for example, than ‘distributed practice’: reinforcing and reviewing essential skills. Independent reading is also important. There are many more rare and unique words in even relatively simple texts than in the conversation of college graduates. Reading widely and with stamina is an important way to build verbal proficiency and background knowledge, keys to mature reading comprehension.

--Robert Pondiscio

It is well to read everything of something, and something of everything.

--Joseph Brodsky

I don't believe one reads to escape reality. A person reads to *confirm* a reality he knows is there, but which he has not experienced.

--Lawrence Durrell

The rise of novel in the 19th century had parents very concerned that their children were staying in their rooms all the time, were not being social.

--Richard Gottlieb

The time to read is any time: no apparatus, no appointment of time and place, is necessary. It is the only art which can be practiced at any hour of the day or night, whenever the time and inclination comes, that is your time for reading; in joy or sorrow, health or illness.

--Holbrook Jackson

Tell me what you read and I'll tell you who you are is true enough, but I'd know you better if you told me what you reread.

--Francois Mauriac

I am moreover inclined to be concise when I reflect on the constant occupation of the citizens in public and private affairs, so that in their few leisure moments they may read and understand as much as possible.

--Marcus V. Pollio

The writers who have the deepest influence on one are those one reads in one's more impressionable, early life, and often it is the more youthful works of those writers that leave the deepest imprint.

—J. M. Coetzee

Novel-reading is indeed unusually private, unusually personal, unusually intimate. It doesn't happen out there, in front of our eyes; it happens in here, in our heads. The form's relationship to time is also unique. The novel isn't static, like painting and sculpture, but though it tells a story, it doesn't unfold in an inexorable progression, like music, dance, theater, or film. The reader, not the clock, controls the pace. The novel allows you the freedom to pause: to savor a phrase, contemplate a meaning, daydream about an image, absorb the impact of a revelation—make the experience uniquely your own.

--William Deresiewicz



The shift from print to digital reading has reduced the pursuit of work in the humanities. Digital reading does not allow for so-called ‘deep reading’ that print reading does. This deep reading can only come from a sustained and lengthy period with the assigned text; not by skimming or speed reading.

--Naomi Baron

Children, in new research, gain much less from reading (or, in the new word, accessing) books on a screen than they do reading actual books. Perhaps adults do too.

—Michael Wolff

When I read a book I seem to read it with my eyes only, but now and then I come across a passage, perhaps only a phrase, which has a meaning for me, and it becomes part of me.

—W. Somerset Maugham

At school, our reading text was called *Fun with Dick and Jane*. By comparison, Seuss’ characters were having loads more fun.

—Jack Hamann

In reading, one foresees; one waits. He foresees the end of the sentence, the following sentence, the next page. He waits for them to confirm or disappoint his fore-sights. The reading is composed of a host of hypotheses, of dreams followed by awakenings, of hopes and deceptions.

—Jean-Paul Sartre

To escape from the grown-ups into reading was the best way of communing with them. Though they were absent, their future gaze entered me through the back of my head, emerged from my pupils, and propelled along the floor the sentences which had been read a hundred times and which I was reading for the first time.

—Jean-Paul Sartre

A list of the vices of reading should put first, as worst and most disabling, the expectation that everything should be easily understood. Things worth thought and reflection cannot be taken in at a glance.

—I. A. Richards

The process of reading is not a half sleep, but in highest sense, an exercise, a gymnast’s struggle: that the reader is to do something for him or herself, must be on the alert, must construct indeed the poem, argument, history, metaphysical essay—the text furnishing the hints, the clue, the start, the framework. Not the book needs so much to be the complete thing, but the reader of the book does.

—Walt Whitman

Reading gives one something to think about other than one's self.

--Tom Bissell

A child who reads will be an adult who thinks.

—Unknown

Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man.

—Francis Bacon

The reader has to be creative when he's reading. He has to try to make the thing alive. A good reader has to do a certain amount of work when he is reading.

—Nathalie Sarraute

Reading won't solve your problems. But then again, neither will housework.

—Unknown

Roughly half of today's prison inmates are functionally illiterate.

—Robert Perkinson

There is no APP to replace your lap! Read to your child every day.

—Unknown

Sometimes I think – no matter how important or essential reading is to future success at school, in work, in life – the most important reason of all for reading bedtime stories is that for half an hour you are all your child's, a chance for him or her to feel that they are indeed loved, cherished and a priority in your life. How important and priceless is that sense and knowledge for a child to have in the midst of our busy, multi-tasking lives? I don't think that it can be measured

—*Budapest British  
International  
Academy*

I am a reader. Not because I don't have a life, but because I choose to have many.

—Unknown

Reading to children, even before they can understand, teaches them to associate books with love and affection.

—*Child and Youth  
Network Logo*

Reading can seriously damage your ignorance.

—[sun-gazing.com](http://sun-gazing.com)

You're never too old, too wacky, too wild, to pick up a book and read to a child.

—Dr. Seuss

Reading doesn't mean accepting everything you read, it means reasoning everything you read.

—Amit Kalantri

You are a reader, and therefore a thinker, an observer, a living soul who wants more out of this human experience.

—Salil Jha

The 'to read' list is a place where most good books go to die.

—Danny L. Deaubé

Reading books you like can soothe an invisible wound that irritatingly bleeds one's mood.

—Angelica Hopes

Is there any rationale for building entire mansions of words? I think there is, and that the readers of Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind* and Charles Dicken's *Bleak House* understand it: sometimes even a monster is no monster. Sometimes it's beautiful and we fall in love with all that story, more than any film or TV program could ever hope to provide. Even after a thousand pages we don't want to leave the world the writer has made for us, or the make—believe people who live there.

—Stephen King

I don't read fiction to study the art of fiction, but simply because I like stories. Yet there is a learning process going on. Every book you pick up has its own lesson or lessons, and quite often the bad books have more to teach than the good ones.

—Stephen King

The more extensive your acquaintance is with the works of those who have excelled, the more extensive will be your powers of invention, and what may appear still more like a paradox, the more original will be your composition.

—Sir Joshua Reynolds

Many who resort to crime ultimately can't read or write.

—Wally Amos

I believe I can tell the particular little chances that filled my head first with such chimes of verse, as have never since left ringing there; for I remember, when I began to read, and to take some pleasure in it, there was wont to lie in my mother's parlor (I know not by what accident, for she herself never in her life read any book but of devotion) but there was wont to like Spenser's works. This I happened to fall upon, and was infinitely delighted with the stories of the knights, and giants, and monsters, and brave houses, which I found everywhere there (though my understanding had little to do with all this) and by degrees, with the tinkling of the rhyme and dance of the numbers; so that, I think, I had read him all over before I was twelve years old, and was thus made a poet.

—Abraham Cowley

I do like books, real paper books. I have shelves full to prove it. But reading Proust on my cellphone was, I have to say, like no other reading experience I've had before or since. It was magical....Here are my instructions. Make sure no one else is awake. Turn off the lights. Your windows can stay open. Now tun on your phone and begin reading. Repeat as necessary each night. Do not stop until the very last word of the very last volume, *Time Regained*. Soon you will see that the smallness of your cellphone (my screen was about two by three inches) and the length of Proust's sentences are not the shocking mismatch you might think. Your cellphone screen is like a tiny glass-bottomed boat moving slowly over a vast and glowing ocean of words in the night. There is no shore. There is nothing beyond the words in front of you. It's a voyage for one in the nighttime. Pure romance.

—Sarah Boxer

Reading is equivalent to thinking with someone else's head instead of with one's own.

—Arthur Schopenhauer

To read a newspaper is to refrain from reading something worth while. The first discipline of education must therefore be to refuse resolutely to feed the mind with canned chatter.

—Aleister Crowley

Children are made readers on the laps of their parents.

—Emilie Buchwald

Much of my reading time over the last decade and a half has been spent reading aloud to my children. Those children's bedtime rituals of supper, bath, stories, and sleep have been a staple of my life and some of the best, most special times I can remember.

—Louise Brown

The fun of reading as ‘an exchange between consciousnesses, a way for human beings to talk to each other about stuff we can’t normally talk about.’

— David Foster Wallace

Reading aloud is, you know, sort of what I do best. I probably get more value hearing a story that I’m reading to my children and grandchildren but am also reading to myself—I’m in the room, both the reader and the audience. It gives you an interesting double-mirror effect.

—Steven Spielberg

We read about 1,000 times more than we write.

—Rich Gold

Reading a contemporary novel is usually but not always a waste of time. My point is that we should not read something new unless it promises to be as good as the classics we thereby leave unread.

--B. R. Myers

A nationwide poll recently showed that 25 percent of all adults read no books at all in a given year.

--Richard Bausch

Fiction writing, and the reading of it, and book buying, have always been the activities of a tiny minority of people, even in the most-literate societies.

--Paul Theroux

Anything you read can influence your work, so I try to read good stuff.

—S. E. Hinton

The newspaper press is the people’s university. Half the readers of Christendom read little else.

--J. Parton

Where the press is free and every man able to read, all is safe.

--Thomas Jefferson

A powerful agent is the right word. Whenever we come upon one of those intensely right words in a book or a newspaper the resulting effect is physical as well as spiritual, and electrically prompt.

--Mark Twain

The beginning of education lies in the exploration of the meaning of words.  
—Antisthenes

What one has not experienced, one will never understand in print.  
—Isadora Duncan

No person who can read is ever successful at cleaning out an attic.  
—Ann Landers

Reading—not TV, not movies, not video games or Twitter—is the one thing that instills empathy in its consumer. It also provides a distraction, an escape from the world around us. There have been times in all of our lives when we’ve needed to pass an awful day just to get to a tomorrow. Some days, I’ve found, reading is the only thing that makes that tomorrow show up a little quicker.  
—Nicki Porter

Teaching reading IS rocket science.  
—Louisa Moats

Be nice to teachers. They’re the reason you can read this!  
—Unknown

Children who do hear stories and are read stories from early on have an intuitive understanding of how one thing resolutely leads into another, that things in life are connected, whereas children who do not hear stories do not hear that connectedness. They think that incidents happen without connection, that life is a series of disconnected bursts that happen to you.  
—Jane Yolen

A child should never be without a book.  
—Unknown

A house without books is like a room without windows. No man has a right to bring up his children without surrounding them with books, if he has the means to buy them. It is a wrong to his family. Children learn to read by being in the presence of books. The love of knowledge comes with reading and grows upon it. And the love of knowledge, in a young mind, is almost a warrant against the inferior excitement of passions and vices.  
--Horace Mann

The ten most frequently used words in the English language (making up about one-fourth of all our reading) are: the, of, and, a, to, in, is, I, that, it.

--Mark C. Blazek

What do teachers and curriculum directors mean by 'value' reading? A look at the practice of most schools suggests that when a school 'values' reading what it really means is that the school intensely focuses on raising state-mandated reading test scores- the kind of reading our students will rarely, if ever, do in adulthood.

—Kelly Gallagher

I think they assign things to students which are way over their heads, which destroy your love of reading, rather than leading you to it. I don't understand that.

—Charles M. Schulz

American high schools turn out 700,000 graduates each year who are unable to read their own diplomas.

—*Training Magazine*

Learning about reading and writing ought to occur in situations where written language serves functions such as to entertain (as in books), inform (as in instructions on packages), or to direct (as on traffic signs).

--*Becoming a Nation of Readers*

Analyses of schools that have been successful in promoting independent reading suggest that one of the keys is ready access to books.

--*Becoming a Nation of Readers*

Reading is a basic tool in the living of a good life.

—Mortimer J. Adler

If you are reading in order to become a better reader, you cannot read just any book or article. You will not improve as a reader if all you read are books that are well within your capacity. You must tackle books that are beyond you, or, as we have said, books that are over your head. Only books of that sort will make you stretch your mind. And unless you stretch, you will not learn.

—Mortimer J. Adler

The elementary school must assume as its sublime and most solemn responsibility the task of teaching every child to read. Any school that does not accomplish this has failed.

—William J. Bennett

Some claim that, a big source of reading problems is the deadening quality of what children are given to read. Children who go through the considerable work of learning to read can lose their appetite for it if all they get is drab monosyllabic vignettes in ‘readers.’ According to a *Department of Education* study, elementary schools tend to use basal readers up to the later grades—far beyond the point for which they were originally intended.

—William J. Bennett

We do not feed pabulum to children who are ready for meat and vegetables, and we should not feed verbal pabulum to children able to digest literature. Children learn to read by reading—and schools should provide plenty of opportunities for them to do so. Yet one study shows that in the typical primary school class, only seven or eight minutes per day are allotted to silent reading time. Children spend about 70 percent of the time allocated for reading instruction engaged in ‘seatwork,’ mostly on skill sheets and workbooks that may require only a perfunctory level of reading.

—William J. Bennett

It is vitally important that children acquire solid reading skills early on, not only so they can begin to savor literature, but also so they can achieve success in school. Research shows that children who experience school failure often begin to have serious problems around fourth grade, when they must start applying their reading skills in earnest to other academic subjects.

—William J. Bennett

In the reading process, meaning is produced as information from the text interacts with knowledge possessed by the reader. Again and again, research on the reading process has documented the importance of shared knowledge, background knowledge, and prior knowledge to reading comprehension.

—Jean Osborn

Reading is not walking on the words; it’s grasping the soul of them.

— Paulo Freire

Education... has produced a vast population able to read but unable to distinguish what is worth reading.

—G. M. Trevelyan



75% of freshmen entering a two-year college required remedial work in English, math, or both. 60% of freshmen in less selective four-year colleges required some remediation work.

—*National Center for  
Public Policy and  
Higher Education*

There is no APP to replace your lap! Read to your child every day.

—Unknown

Read One Book a Day to a Child

Your child will enjoy:

By Age 1.....365 Books

By Age 2.....730 Books

By Age 3.....1095 Books

By Age 4.....1460 Books

In Reality:

*Dear Zoo*—301 times, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*—431 times and *Everybody Poops*—728 times!

—*Growing Book by Book*

Reading helps your seed of knowledge grow.

—Slogan

Students who perform poorly on standardized reading tests often approach test taking with a fundamental misconception: Knowing they'll be tested on the meaning of a passage, they read to 'get it all' instead of reading to answer given questions.

—Belta Gordon

We are in a time, because of the proliferation of online media and a hundred channels on cable, where teenagers and young adults and eight- and nine-year-olds do not read enough. And the SAT is very unforgiving for students who do not read.

—Jonathan Grayer

High school teachers who want to get reluctant readers turned around need to give the students some say in the reading list. Make it collaborative: The students will feel ownership, and everyone will dig in.

—Dave Eggers

Students read for tests and because their parents ask them to, but I think it's very important to tell children that you can read for fun, too, and to understand human spirit. It builds empathy.

—Adora Svitak

The idea that students don't know how to write clearly and precisely is as old as school itself, probably, but lately it seems as if students no longer know how to read either. It is true on my campus and from I can gather, on many other college campuses. The students understand words, sentences -- they are not illiterate -- but they don't seem to grasp the reasons for reading. They seem baffled when asked to take two thoughts, connect them, and form something new. They read James Baldwin or Henry David Thoreau and their primary reaction seems to be, 'Okay, now I've ready that. I'm done.' As if the only goal in reading was to have looked at every word.

—Dinty W. Moore

School made us 'literate' but did not teach us to read for pleasure.

—Ambeth R. Ocampo

In a school community, someone who reads a book for some secretive purpose, other than discussing it, is strange. What was she reading for?

—John Irving

The best students come from homes where education is revered: where there are books, and children see their parents reading them.

—Leo Buscaglia

I seldom read anything that is not of a factual nature because I want to invest my time wisely in the things that will improve my life. Don't misunderstand; there is nothing wrong with reading purely for the joy of it. Novels have their place, but biographies of famous men and women contain information that can change lives.

—Zig Ziglar

Reading has been the fuel of my motivation: it has changed the direction in which I have traveled, and it has enhanced my creative imagination more than any other activity I have ever pursued.

—Zig Ziglar

Think before you speak. Read before you think.

—Fran Lebowitz

Reading was my escape and my comfort, my consolation, my stimulant of choice: reading for the pure pleasure of it, for the beautiful stillness that surrounds you when you hear an author's words reverberating in your head.

—Paul Auster

## **READER'S BILL OF RIGHTS**

1. The right to not read
2. The right to skip pages
3. The right to not finish
4. The right to reread
5. The right to read anything
6. The right to escapism
7. The right to read anywhere
8. The right to browse
9. The right to read out loud
10. The right to not defend your tastes

—Daniel Pennac

Fools have a habit of believing that everything written by a famous author is admirable. For my part I read only to please myself and like only what suits my taste.

—Voltaire

Writing and reading decrease our sense of isolation. They deepen and widen and expand our sense of life: they feed the soul. When writers make us shake our heads with the exactness of their prose and their truths, and even make us laugh about ourselves or life, our buoyancy is restored. We are given a shot at dancing with, or at least clapping along with, the absurdity of life, instead of being squashed by it over and over again. It's like singing on a boat during a terrible storm at sea. You can't stop the raging storm, but singing can change the hearts and spirits of the people who are together on that ship.

—Anne Lamott

Bea says that the art of reading is slowly dying, that it's an intimate ritual, that a book is a mirror that offers us only what we already carry inside us, that when we read, we do it with all our heart and mind, and great readers are becoming more scarce by the day.

—Carlos Ruiz Zafón

She remembered one of her boyfriends asking, offhandedly, how many books she read in a year. 'A few hundred,' she said.

'How do you have the time?' he asked, gobsmacked.

She narrowed her eyes and considered the array of potential answers in front of her. Because I don't spend hours flipping through cable complaining there's nothing on? Because my entire Sunday is not eaten up with pre-game, in-game, and post-game talking heads? Because I do not spend every night drinking overpriced beer and engaging in dick-swinging contests with the other financirati? Because when I am waiting in line, at the gym, on the train, eating lunch, I am not complaining about the wait/staring into space/admiring myself in reflective surfaces? I am reading! 'I don't know,' she said, shrugging.

Eleanor Brown

I have lived a thousand lives and I've loved a thousand loves. I've walked on distant worlds and seen the end of time. Because I read.

—George R. R. Martin

You forget everything. The hours slip by. You travel in your chair through centuries you seem to see before you, your thoughts are caught up in the story, dallying with the details or following the course of the plot, you enter into characters, so that it seems as if it were your own heart beating beneath their costumes.

—Gustave Flaubert

Children deprived of words become school dropouts; dropouts deprived of hope behave delinquently. Amateur censors blame delinquency on reading immoral books and magazines, when in fact, the inability to read anything is the basic trouble.

—Peter S. Jennison

Reading changes your life. Reading unlocks worlds unknown or forgotten, taking travelers around the world and through time. Reading helps you escape the confines of school and pursue your own education. Through characters—the saints and the sinners, real or imagined—reading shows you how to be a better human being.

—Donalyn Miller

Reading is that fruitful miracle of a communication in the midst of solitude.

—Marcel Proust

Teenagers read millions of books every year. They read for entertainment and for education. They read because of school assignments and pop culture fads. And there are millions of teens who read because they are sad and lonely and enraged. They read because they live in an often-terrible world. They read because they believe despite the callow protestations of certain adults that books—especially the dark and dangerous ones—will save them.

—Sherman Alexie

Sometimes they would sit in the parlor together, both reading—in entirely separate worlds, to be sure, but joined somehow. When this happened, other people in the family couldn't bring themselves to disturb them. All that could be heard in the parlor was the sound of pages, turning.

—Alice Hoffman

The good, the admirable reader identifies himself not with the boy or the girl in the book, but with the mind that conceived and composed that book.

—Vladimir Nabokov

So I kept reading, just to stay alive. In fact, I'd read two or three books at the same time, so I wouldn't finish one without being in the middle of another -- anything to stop me from falling into the big, gaping void. You see, books fill the empty spaces. If I'm waiting for a bus, or am eating alone, I can always rely on a book to keep me company. Sometimes I think I like them even more than people. People will let you down in life. They'll disappoint you and hurt you and betray you. But not books. They're better than life.

—Marc Acito

We are the children of a technological age. We have found streamlined ways of doing much of our routine work. Printing is no longer the only way of reproducing books. Reading them, however, has not changed.

—Lawrence Clark Powell

In the past few years I've assigned books to be read before a student attends one of my weeklong seminars. I have been astonished by how few people —people who supposedly want to write—read books, and if they read them, how little they examine them.

—Natalie Goldberg

Fast reading of a great novel will get us the plot. It will get us names, a shadowy idea of characters, a sketch of settings. It will not get us subtleties, small differentiations, depth of emotion and observation, multilayered human experience, the appreciation of simile and metaphor, any sense of context, any comparison with other novels, other writers. Fast reading will not get us cadence and complexities of style and language. It will not get us anything that enters not just the conscious mind but the unconscious. It will not allow the book to burrow down into our memory and become part of ourselves, the accumulation of knowledge and wisdom and vicarious experience which helps to form us as complete human beings. It will not develop our awareness or add to the sum of our knowledge and intelligence. Read parts of a newspaper quickly or an encyclopaedia entry, or a fast-food thriller, but do not insult yourself or a book which has been created with its author's painstakingly acquired skill and effort, by seeing how fast you can dispose of it.

—Susan Hill

Unlike television, reading does not swallow the senses or dictate thought. Reading stimulates the ecology of the imagination. Can you remember the wonder you felt when first reading *The Jungle Book* or *Tom Sawyer* or *Huckleberry Finn*? Kipling's world within a world; Twain's slow river, the feel of freedom and sand on the secret island, and in the depths of the cave?

—Richard Louv

For centuries, no one was concerned that books weren't girl-friendly, because no one really cared if girls read; but even so, we persisted for long enough that literature has slowly come to accommodate us. Modern boys, by contrast, are not trying to read in a culture of opposition. Nobody is telling them reading doesn't matter, that boys don't need to read and that actually, no prospective wife looks for literacy in a husband. Quite the opposite! Male literary culture thrives, both teachers and parents are throwing books at their sons, and the fact that the books aren't sticking isn't, as the nature of the complaint makes clear, because boys don't like reading – no. The accusation is that boys don't like reading about girls, which is a totally different matter.

Because constantly, consistently, our supposedly equal society penalises boys who express an interest in anything feminine. The only time boys are discouraged from books all together is in contexts where, for whatever reason, they've been given the message that reading itself is girly—which is a wider extrapolation of the same problem.

—Foz Meadows

Books are not about passing the time. They're about other lives. Other worlds.

—Alan Bennett

Every new book we read in our brief and busy lives means that a classic is left unread.

—B. R. Myers

There are two kinds of books in the world—the boring kind they make you read in school and the interesting kind that they won't let you read in school because then they would have to talk about real stuff like sex and divorce and is there a God and if there isn't then what happens when you die, and how come the history books have so many lies in them.

—LouAnne Johnson

He believes that if talent is demanded of a literary publisher or a writer, it must also be demanded of a reader. Because we mustn't deceive ourselves: on the journey of reading we often travel through difficult terrains that demand a capacity for intelligent emotion, a desire to understand the other, and to approach a language distinct from the one of our daily tyrannies... Writers fail readers, but it also happens the other way around and readers fail writers when all they ask of them is confirmation that the world is how they see it.

—Enrique Vila-Matas

Young minds—young brains—need stories and ideas like the ones in those [censored and banned] books in order to grow. They need ideas that you disagree with. They need ideas that I disagree with. Or they'll never be able to figure out what ideas they believe in.

—Lev Grossman

The worst book imaginable has a redeeming quality if it gets a young person to read.

—Tiffini Johnson

She read all sorts of things: travels, and sermons, and old magazines. Nothing was so dull that she couldn't get through with it. Anything really interesting absorbed her so that she never knew what was going on about her. The little girls to whose houses she went visiting had found this out, and always hid away their story-books when she was expected to tea. If they didn't do this, she was sure to pick one up and plunge in, and then it was no use to call her, or tug at her dress, for she neither saw nor heard anything more, till it was time to go home.

—Susan Coolidge

If you have never said 'Excuse me' to a parking meter or bashed your shins on a fireplug, you are probably wasting too much valuable reading time.

—Sherri Chasin Calvo

Whatever it is that you're feeling, whatever it is you have a question about, whatever it is that you long to know, there is some book, somewhere, with the key. You just have to search for it.

—Adriana Trigiani

School children, who have enjoyed reading a romance or a detective thriller or a novel about terror and conquest, make the invariable mistake of studying literature in the college. They make the mistake of learning theory in place of art; they acquire impediments in their own enjoyment of the books by allowing a set of theories to govern their own reading.

—Anuradha  
Bhattacharyya

Speed reading? Why would anyone give up the pleasure of letting the writer set the pace? Of using one's ears to adjust to a new voice?... This sort of reading does away with the writer, and is probably best used on textbooks which eliminate the write from the start. If you must read everything at the same speed, why not choose to read slowly?... slowly enough to let the words reverberate, to draw the imagination to them.

—William Corbett

'I can always tell when you're reading somewhere in the house,' my mother used to say. 'There's a special silence, a *reading* silence.'

—Francis Spufford

Since we know that many books have in many different ways changed the thinking of the world, we can easily believe that many an individual can and does have his life changed directly through the experience of reading a book.

--K. A. Menninger

I think of the picture book, especially, as a shared experience: An older person reads aloud from it and talks with a child about it. It is a unique medium that can adapt itself completely to the reader; you can skip pages, go backwards, study one page endlessly. A good picture book lasts a long time, with pages full of details to explore again and again. Through time, picture books can even take on a nice patina; old books don't necessarily become illegible. They are like old friends, perhaps reminding you, with that water stain, of a day you were reading on the beach or, with that smear of gravy, of the day you couldn't even stop reading for dinner. You can even take a book to bed with you and read it under the blankets.

--Blair Lent



Reading well is one of the great pleasures that solitude can afford you.

--Harold Bloom

I believe in books; I don't think they're finished....It may be that reading will always be limited to a minority, in the face of media which are more superficially attractive, more compulsive, less demanding.

--John Rowe Townsend

Who would you be if you hadn't read as a child?...I wouldn't still know the NATO phonetic alphabet by heart because of a beloved childhood book about a family at sea. I wouldn't have fancied myself an amateur detective, sleuthing in the spirit of the Hardy Boys, Nancy Drew, and Encyclopedia Brown. I wouldn't have the urge to hide in the restrooms at closing time when I visit the Met (thanks very kindly, *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*)....Who would I be without these books? Less empathetic, certainly; less kind, possibly; an ever poorer grammarian, surely.

—Nicki Porter

It starts from the day they're born. Everything is gender-coded for babies, from pacifiers to socks. Small children generally won't consider stories about the opposite gender or off-gender toys (cars, play kitchens, etc.) as off-limits unless they are told so. And they are told so: by parents, teachers, siblings, and friends, constantly and in many ways. I meet homeschooled teenage boys who have never considered that they should be ashamed of reading about girls, so I know school is a big part of the conditioning. I've noticed that the year that a lot of boys tend to double-down on 'nothing girlie for me!' is third grade....we've done such a good job of shaming them for being interested in any story that happens to star a girl.

—Shannon Hale

The biggest best seller in modern times was probably *Gone With The Wind*. People who never read a book in their lives had to read that--and what was the sale? Maybe 20 million copies, the absolute saturation point. Put that against the total population! Compare it with the television audience!

--Robert Giroux

There's nothing inherently wrong with a princess. Historically, princesses are fascinating people with a great deal of consequence. There is a subset of stories about princesses which has them as helpless people waiting a lot and sleeping a lot and powerless to do anything without a man to help. That's the kind of story we wanted to subvert.

—Shannon Hale

Maybe you believe that you need a computer so your children can get smarter faster....No, if you want your kids to get smarter, encourage them to read books. Books cost less and they will not crash, conk out and freeze on the screen. They can also be read in the kitchen, the living room, the bathroom, the bedroom, sitting up or lying down. Amazingly versatile product, the book.

--Mike Royko

When you read to a child, when you put a book in a child's hands, you are bringing that child news of the infinitely varied nature of life. You are an awakener.

--Paula Fox

Few children learn to love books by themselves. Someone has to lure them into the wonderful world of the written word; someone has to show them the way.

--Orville Prescott

You don't have to burn books to destroy a culture. Just get people to stop reading them.

--Ray Bradbury

There is nothing like a banned book to turn a teenager into a devoted reader.

--Malcolm Jones

Americans barely crack the top 25 when it comes to which countries read the most books. India, Thailand and China are ranked one, two and three by the World Culture Index, while the United States comes in 23rd, behind countries such as Egypt, Australia, Turkey and Germany.

—Amy Ellis Nutt

I must say I find television very educational. The minute somebody turns it on, I go into the library and read a good book.

—Groucho Marx

Poetry has the potential to bridge the gap between learning and life. One advantage is its length. Because most poems are fairly short, they are not as intimidating to the average reader as a typical middle school novel. Another advantage is that poetry is powerful. Within the lines of a well-constructed poem is a world of meaning and metaphor that connects print to life. It is precisely this connection that holds appeal for the adolescent learner who is on a perpetual journey of self-exploration.

—Janet A. Finke &  
Karen D. Wood

Anyone who says they have only one life to live must not know how to read a book.

—Unknown

Books should be a part of every child's life. They should occupy a central place in home and classroom alike. Children should have at their fingertips books like *Where the Wild Things Are*, *Charlotte's Web*, and *Winnie the Pooh*. This is the only way they will really grasp the idea that reading is a joy rather than a burden. Yet in a recent study of fifth graders' reading habits, 90 percent of the children were found to read books only four minutes a day or less. The same children may watch television an average of three and a half hours a day.

—William J. Bennett

Outside of a dog, a book is man's best friend. Inside of a dog it's too dark to read.

—Groucho Marx

You are more likely to find three TVs inside a randomly selected house than you are to find a single book that is or was not read to pass an exam, to please God, or to be a better cook.

—Mokokoma  
Mokhonoana

No book, however good, should ever be read as a task. If you do so read a book, it is very likely that you will not only get nothing out of it but that you will have toward the book and its author a repugnance that is unwarranted.

—Burton Rascoe

I declare after all there is no enjoyment like reading! How much sooner one tires of any thing than of a book!—When I have a house of my own, I shall be miserable if I have not an excellent library.

—Jane Austen

There is something about words. In expert hands, manipulated deftly, they take you prisoner. Wind themselves around your limbs like spider silk, and when you are so enthralled you cannot move, they pierce your skin, enter your blood, numb your thoughts. Inside you they work their magic.

—Diane Setterfield

The books transported her into new worlds and introduced her to amazing people who lived exciting lives. She went on olden-day sailing ships with Joseph Conrad. She went to Africa with Ernest Hemingway and to India with Rudyard Kipling. She travelled all over the world while sitting in her little room in an English village.

—Roald Dahl

No two persons ever read the same book.

—Edmund Wilson

‘Will I have to use a dictionary to read your book?’ asked Mrs. Dodypol. ‘It depends,’ says I, ‘how much you used the dictionary before you read it.’

—Alexander Theroux

You might have noticed that I have been sending you used books. I have done this not to save money, but to make a point which is that a used book, unlike a used car, hasn’t lost any of its initial value. A good story rolls of the lot into the hands of its new reader as smoothly as the day it was written. And there’s another reason for these used paperbacks that never cost much even when new; I like the idea of holding a book that someone else has held, of eyes running over lines that have already seen the light of other eyes. That, in one image, is the community of readers, is the communion of literature.

—Yann Martel

There is a wonder in reading Braille that the sighted will never know: to touch words and have them touch you back.

—Jim Fiebig

On my website there’s a quote from the writer Anthony Burgess: ‘The greatest gift is the passion for reading. It is cheap, it consoles, it distracts, it excites, it gives you knowledge of the world and experience of a wide kind.’

I’ve always found that inspiring because the written word, as an art form, is unlike any other: movies, TV, music, they’re shared experiences, but books aren’t like that. The relationship between a writer and a reader is utterly unique to those two individuals. The world that forms in your head as you read a book will be slightly different to that experienced by every other reader. Anywhere. Ever. Reading is very personal, a communication from one mind to another, something which can’t be exactly copied, or replicated, or directly shared.

If I read the work of, say, one of the great Victorian novelists, it’s like a gift from the past, a momentary connection to another’s thoughts. Their ideas are down on paper, to be picked up by me, over a century later. Writers can speak individually to readers across a year, or ten years, or a thousand.

That’s why I love books.

—Simon Cheshire

From that time on, the world was hers for the reading. She would never be lonely again, never miss the lack of intimate friends. Books became her friends and there was one for every mood. There was poetry for quiet companionship. There was adventure when she tired of quiet hours. There would be love stories when she came into adolescence, and when she wanted to feel a closeness to someone she could read a biography. On that day when she first knew she could read, she made a vow to read one book a day as long as she lived.

—Betty Smith

If I show up at your house ten years from now and find nothing in your living room but *The Readers Digest*, nothing on your bedroom night table but the newest Dan Brown novel, and nothing in your bathroom but *Jokes for the John*, I'll chase you down to the end of your driveway and back, screaming 'Where are your books? You graduated college ten years ago, so how come there are no damn books in your house? Why are you living on the intellectual equivalent of Kraft Macaroni and Cheese?'

—Stephen King

Reading, for me, is like this: consumptive, pleasing, calming, as much as edifying. It's how I feel after a good dinner. That's why I do it so often: It feels wonderful. The book is mind and I insert myself into it, cover it entire, ear my way through every last slash and dot. That's something you can do with a book, unlike television or movies or the Internet. You can eat it, or mark it, like a dog does on a hydrant.

—Tara Bray Smith

He liked the mere act of reading, the magic of turning scratches on a page into words inside his head.

—John Green

You should never read just for 'enjoyment.' Read to make yourself smarter! Less judgmental. More apt to understand your friends' insane behavior, or better yet, your own. Pick 'hard books.' Ones you have to concentrate on while reading. And for god's sake, don't let me ever hear you say, 'I can't read fiction. I only have time for the truth.' Fiction is the truth, fool! Ever hear of 'literature'? That means fiction, too, stupid.

—John Waters

At one magical instant in your early childhood, the page of a book—that string of confused, alien ciphers—shivered into meaning. Words spoke to you, gave up their secrets; at that moment, whole universes opened. You became, irrevocably, a reader.

—Alberto Manguel

People are so fucking dumb. Nobody reads anymore, nobody goes out and looks and explores the society and culture they were brought up in. People have attention spans of five seconds and as much depth as a glass of water.

—David Bowie

Insensibly he formed the most delightful habit in the world, the habit of reading: he did not know that thus he was providing himself with a refuge from all the distress of life; he did not know either that he was creating for himself an unreal world which would make the real world of every day a source of bitter disappointment.

—W. Somerset Maugham

I love the solitude of reading. I love the deep dive into someone else's story, the delicious ache of a last page.

—Naomi Shihab Nye

To feel most beautifully alive means to be reading something beautiful, ready always to apprehend in the flow of language the sudden flash of poetry.

—Gaston Bachelard

I care not how humble your bookshelf may be, or how lonely the room which it adorns. Close the door of that room behind you, shut off with it all the cares of the outer world, plunge back into the soothing company of the great dead, and then you are through the magic portal into that fair land whither worry and vexation can follow you no more. You have left all that is vulgar and all that is sordid behind you. There stand your noble, silent comrades, waiting in their ranks. Pass your eye down their files. Choose your man. And then you have but to hold up your hand to him and away you go together into dreamland.

—Arthur Conan Doyle

The only advice, indeed, that one person can give another about reading is to take no advice, to follow your own instincts, to use your own reason, to come to your own conclusions. If this is agreed between us, then I feel at liberty to put forward a few ideas and suggestions because you will not allow them to fetter that independence which is the most important quality that a reader can possess. After all, what laws can be laid down about books? The battle of Waterloo was certainly fought on a certain day; but is Hamlet a better play than Lear? Nobody can say. Each must decide that question for himself. To admit authorities, however heavily furred and gowned, into our libraries and let them tell us how to read, what to read, what value to place upon what we read, is to destroy the spirit of freedom which is the breath of those sanctuaries. Everywhere else we may be bound by laws and conventions—there we have none.

—Virginia Woolf

We are absurdly accustomed to the miracle of a few written signs being able to contain immortal imagery, involutions of thought, new worlds with live people, speaking, weeping, laughing. We take it for granted so simply that in a sense, by the very act of brutish routine acceptance, we undo the work of the ages, the history of the gradual elaboration of poetical description and construction, from the treeman to Browning, from the caveman to Keats. What if we awake one day, all of us, and find ourselves utterly unable to read? I wish you to gasp not only at what you read but at the miracle of its being readable.

—Vladimir Nabokov

The act of true reading is in its very essence democratic. Consider the nature of what happens when we read a book—and I mean, of course, a work of literature, not an instruction manual or a textbook—in private, unsupervised, unspied-on, alone. It isn't like a lecture: it's like a conversation. There's a back-and-forthness about it. The book proposes, the reader questions, the book responds, the reader considers. We bring our own preconceptions and expectations, our own intellectual qualities, and our limitations, too, our own previous experiences of reading, our own temperament, our own hopes and fears, our own personality to the encounter.

—Philip Pullman

The ability to read becomes devalued when what one has learned to read adds nothing of importance to one's life.

—Bruno Bettelheim

Children ask of a story what they ask of a dream—that it satisfy their wishes.

--Randall Jarrell

I believe that children in this country need a more robust literary diet than they are getting. ...It does not hurt them to read about good and evil, love and hate, life and death. Nor do I think they should read only about things that they understand. '...a man's reach should exceed his grasp.' So should a child's. For myself, I will never talk down to, or draw down to, children.

—Barbara Cooney

Reading is sometimes thought of as a form of escapism, and it's a common turn of phrase to speak of getting lost in a book. But a book can also be where one finds oneself; and when a reader is grasped and held by a book, reading does not feel like an escape from life so much as it feels like an urgent, crucial dimension of life itself.

—Rebecca Mead

I think imagination is at the heart of everything we do. Scientific discoveries couldn't have happened without imagination. Art, music, and literature couldn't exist without imagination. And so anything that strengthens imagination, and reading certainly does that, can help us for the rest of our lives.

—Lloyd Alexander

Yes, I read. I have that absurd habit. I like beautiful poems, moving poetry, and all the beyond of that poetry. I am extraordinarily sensitive to those poor, marvelous words left in our dark night by a few men I never knew.

—Louis Aragon

She would go off in the morning with the punt full of books, and spend long glorious days away in the forest lying on the green springy carpet of whortleberries, reading. She would most diligently work at furnishing her empty mind. She would sternly endeavour to train it not to jump.

—Elizabeth von Arnim

She liked getting hold of some book... and keeping it to herself, and gnawing its contents in privacy, and pondering the meaning without sharing her thoughts with any one, or having to decide whether the book was a good one or a bad one.

—Virginia Woolf

If you have feelings about reading, you feel the rhythm of prose or of a poem like music. It awakens something in your soul and then of course you study, read, you grow up and you begin to understand the message and that is the first step towards understanding life.

—María Kodama

Of all the unexpected things in contemporary literature, this is among the oddest: that kids have an inordinate appetite for very long, very tricky, very strange books about places that don't exist.

—Adam Gopnik

Good literature continually read for pleasure must, let us hope, do some good to the reader: must quicken his perception though dull, and sharpen his discrimination though blunt, and mellow the rawness of his personal opinions.

--Alfred Edward  
Housman

The ordinary man would rather read the life of the cruelest pirate that ever lived than of the wisest philosopher.

--Robert Lynd



They're teaching *Cuckoo* because it's easy. You have to teach what is hard, but teachers don't want to....Let's face it...if you don't learn Shakespeare in high school, you'll probably never get a hit at it.

--Ken Kesey

The purpose of fiction is...to make the reader see.

--Peter DeVries

One magazine called me 'a training bra for Stephen King.' I didn't really like that.

R. L. Stine (Author of the  
juvenile Goose  
Bumps series)

By confining your child to blameless stories of child life in which nothing at all alarming ever happens, you will fail to banish the terrors, and would succeed in banishing all that can ennoble them or make them endurable.

—C. S. Lewis

Ongoing serials are perfect for shy readers who are uncomfortable meeting new protagonists. They are considered a gateway drug for actual literature.

--*Earth (The Book) A  
Visitor's Guide to  
the Human Race*

Without a knowledge of mythology much of the elegant literature of our own language cannot be understood and appreciated.

--Thomas Bulfinch

Read the *Bible*—It will scare the hell out of you.

—Church Sign

Literature teaches us the importance of getting outside our own heads. When you identify with a character of the opposite sex, from a different social class, you can feel what it's like to be someone else. The ability to see the world through someone else's eyes is a skill that pays off in everything from business negotiations to disciplining a child. The point of reading is to learn the value of other perspectives. If all you know about the other side is what your side says about them, then you're not thinking.

--Gary Saul Morson

Reading works of imaginative literature not only deepens a reader's insight into human experience, it also gives him what we usually call a 'broad understanding' of human conduct. A vast panorama of possible human experience is rendered in works of literature, so, a sensitive reader, undergoing these concrete situations, is constantly extending the scope of his own experience. He may be having experiences that in his own life he has never had, may never have, and can never have. And we are referring not only to the erotic, the grotesque, and the exotic, but to the host of situations, that each individual, limited by time and by the circumstances of his own life and personality, can never undergo.

—Geraldine Murphy

Through reading, modern man can realize how a Renaissance subject felt about a king. The skeptic can experience what it is like to be a securely religious man. Those who need to love can know what it is like to need love. Naïve men can recognize the ironic injustice in the scheme of things. Women can see the world through the eyes of a man; adults, through the eyes of a child. The normal man can experience the world of an idiot. The irresponsible can feel with the dutiful. And the secure can discover the tightrope they walk.

Those who tend to find the tragic, the painful, and the pathetic unendurable in life can have these experiences in literature. In life, they may flee from such experiences, sentimentalize them, protest the injustice of them, or confront them stoically or heroically—indeed, do everything but undergo them dispassionately. But when the same human situations are represented in literature at the remove of form, they can respond to them with objective detachment; they *can have* these 'unbearable' experiences. Indeed, they can find what is tragic and horrifying in life tragic and satisfying in literature; they can find what is overwhelmingly pathetic in life ironically humorous in literature or what seems repulsive in life paradoxically comic in literature. Their response to the situation and literature is, of course, with the rendering forces it to be.

—Geraldine Murphy

Reading works of imaginative literature *broadens* experience in ways life cannot....Through works of imaginative literature, readers not only have experiences that, for one reason or another, lie outside the pale of their individual lives, but they have them with more penetration, more clarity, and more intensity than they could have them in everyday life even if they could actually experience all the situations represented.

—Geraldine Murphy

*Don Quixote*, now 400 years old, provided us with the blueprint for a literary form that, above all, teaches readers the cognitive habits of empathetic thinking.

—Nicholas Dames

Works of imaginative literature have the potential for giving a reader a unique *kind* of knowledge: a *kind* of understanding of human conduct that he simply cannot get from life, from any intellectual discipline, or from nonfiction. For it comes from experiencing complex human situations that are fully and intensely rendered. To give this kind of knowledge is the *cognitive* function of imaginative literature.

—Geraldine Murphy

Are you somebody who worries about people not reading novels anymore? And do you think that has an impact on the culture? When I think about how I understand my role as citizen, setting aside being president, and the most important set of understandings that I bring to that position of citizen, the most important stuff I've learned I think I've learned from novels. It has to do with empathy. It has to do with being comfortable with the notion that the world is complicated and full of grays, but there's still truth there to be found, and that you have to strive for that and work for that. And the notion that it's possible to connect with some[one] else even though they're very different from you.

—Barack Obama

By encouraging us to adopt the perspective of an other—in particular, a profoundly alien other—fiction leads us to draw new and wider nets around our otherwise more isolated selves. Reading novels breaks down the boundary between 'me' and 'not me.'

—Nicholas Dames

According to widely publicized studies, reading fiction improves our 'theory of mind,' the capacities that enable us to comprehend the mental states of others. (Especially effective, one study found, is literary fiction—work given to portraying nuanced psychological states in characters—as opposed to genre fiction.) The evidence: Immersion in novels and stories stimulates activity in the brain's 'default network.' That's the neuroscientific term for the complex of regions associated with drifting, non-goal-oriented consciousness as well as with introspective reflection on the self and others, and on remembered or hypothetical experiences—in short, with that once might have been called the moral imagination.

—Nicholas Dames

Novel-reading trains us in empathy.

—Richard Rorty

Fiction can serve as an antidote to the anomie of fierce yet stifling partisan identification and clamorous yet thin social connections.

—Nicholas Dames

It should be *Middlemarch* that changed my life, right? Except it didn't. Nor, really, did any other book read in adulthood. For a book to really change your life, you have to be young, your relationship to the world still pliable. Which puts me in mind of Robert Louis Stevenson's *A Child's Garden of Verses*. I can still see its cover in my mind's eye, that free, fenced-in yard containing stylized, elongated animals—a lion that's being hugged by a little girl. The other children are all facing the camera and waving a warm welcome to...*me!*

—Richard Russo

Only a small proportion of literature does more than partly compensate people for the damage they have suffered in learning to read.

--Rebecca West

I remember thinking that people were crazy for reading the same book more than once, but I now have a new-found appreciation for the re-discovery of literature. The lessons we learned from books in the school curriculum are reinvented and updated when we read as adults.

—Rachel Nichols

Science fiction is held in low regard as a branch of literature, and perhaps it deserves this critical contempt. But if we view it as a kind of sociology of the future, rather than as literature, science fiction has immense value as a mind-stretching force for the creation of the habit of anticipation. Our children should be studying Arthur C. Clarke, William Tenn, Robert Heinlein, Ray Bradbury and Robert Sheckley, not because these writers can tell them about rocket ships and time machines but, more important, because they can lead young minds through an imaginative exploration of the jungle of political, social, psychological, and ethical issues that will confront these children as adults.

— Alvin Toffler

I have read like a man on fire my whole life because the genius of English teachers touched me with the dazzling beauty of language.

—Pat Conroy

Culture is the habit of being pleased with the best and knowing why.

--Henry Van Dyke

Empathy is as important as literacy. When we read with a child, we are doing so much more than teaching him to read or instilling in her a love of language. We are doing something that I believe is just as powerful, and it is something that we are losing as a culture: By reading with a child, we are teaching that child to be human.

—Anna Dewdney

I picked up one of the books and flipped through it. Don't get me wrong, I like reading. But some books should come with warning labels: Caution: contains characters and plots guaranteed to induce sleepiness. Do not attempt to operate heavy machinery after ingesting more than one chapter. Has been known to cause blindness, seizures and a terminal loathing of literature. Should only be taken under the supervision of a highly trained English teacher. Preferably one who grades on the curve.

—Laurie Halse Anderson

There's no better way to inform and expand your mind on a regular basis than to get into the habit of reading good literature.

—Stephen R. Covey

The role of literature is to help develop the individual, and it takes a good book to do this. A poor book takes a child and puts him back a step or two, a mediocre book takes a child and leaves him where he is. A good book promotes an awareness of the possibilities of life, the universality of life, the awakening of response.

--Sheila Egoff

The book that most changed my life was actually a series of books—the complete *Wizard of Oz* series, by L. Frank Baum. My family had a vintage collection of these books, passed down through many generations of hands, and I read them all with rapt passion. I well remember being bundled up in a blanket next to our wood stove in Litchfield, Connecticut, on cold winter weekends, lost in these marvelous tales. These books taught me to love reading, but more important, they taught me to love adventure, and to believe in the heroism of adventurous little girls from small family farms (not unlike my own) who were able to set out on wild voyages of discovery. When I eventually threw myself out into the world, to go on my own wild voyages of discovery, I do believe that the spirit of Dorothy Gale came with me. I am forever grateful to my grandparents, my great-aunts and my great-uncles, who saved these gorgeous and crumbling old books for my enlightenment, my inspiration and my education.

--Elizabeth Gilbert

If a book is easy and fits nicely into all your language conventions and thought forms, then you probably will not grow much from reading it. It may be entertaining, but not enlarging to your understanding. It's the hard books that count. Raking is easy, but all you get is leaves; digging is hard, but you might find diamonds.

—Mortimer J. Adler

If it's not good enough for adults, it's not good enough for children. If a book that is going to be marketed for children does not interest me, a grownup, then I am dishonoring the children for whom the book is intended, and I am dishonoring books. And words.

—Madeleine L'Engle

I do feel that literature should be demystified. What I object to is what is happening in our era: literature is only something you get at school as an assignment. No one reads for fun, or to be subversive or to get turned on to something. It's just like doing math at school. I mean, how often do we sit down and do trigonometry for fun, to relax. I've thought about this, the domination of the literary arts by theory over the past 25 years -- which I detest -- and it's as if you have to be a critic to mediate between the author and the reader and that's utter crap. Literature can be great in all ways, but it's just entertainment like rock'n'roll or a film. It is entertainment. If it doesn't capture you on that level, as entertainment, movement of plot, then it doesn't work. Nothing else will come out of it. The beauty of the language, the characterisation, the structure, all that's irrelevant if you're not getting the reader on that level—moving a story. If that's friendly to readers, I cop to it.

—T. C. Boyle

Men sometimes speak as if the study of the classics would at length make way for more modern and practical studies; but the adventurous student will always study classics, in whatever language they may be written and however ancient they may be. For what are the classics but the noblest recorded thoughts of man? They are the only oracles which are not decayed, and there are such answers to the most modern inquiry in them as Delphi and Dodona never gave. We might as well omit to study Nature because she is old. To read well, that is, to read true books in a true spirit, is a noble exercise, and one that will task the reader more than any exercise which the customs of the day esteem.

—Henry David Thoreau

Not reading poetry amounts to a national pastime.

--Phyllis McGinley

If children were read verse from the very earliest age, without being told solemnly that it is verse, in fact without being told what it is at all, they might feel that poetry is just as 'natural' as prose. We make such a fuss about the sanctity of verse, as if it were a kind of holy writ. Thus a good many children begin to be prejudiced against it.

--Clifton Fadiman

There's no such thing as a kid who hates reading. There are kids who love reading, and kids who are reading the wrong books.

—James Patterson

One possible definition of our modern culture is that it is one in which nine-tenths of our intellectuals can't read any poetry.

--Randall Jarrell

To read a poem in January is as lovely as to go for a walk in June.

--Jean Paul

The works of the great poets have never yet been read by mankind, for only great poets can read them.

--Henry David Thoreau

It may sound a little pompous, but the number of people who read a poem is not as important as how the poem affects those who read it. I'd rather have just one person who reads and feels my work deeply than hundreds of thousands who read it but don't really care about it.

--Derek Walcott

Every single pleasure I can imagine or have experienced is more delightful, more of a pleasure, if you take it in small sips, if you take your time. Reading is not an exception.

—Amos Oz

Anticipating that most poetry will be worse than carrying heavy luggage through O'Hare Airport, the public, to its loss, reads very little of it.

--Russell Baker

Poetry teaches an exceptional love for words, their special properties and ability to signify beyond the literal....such that the experience of reading is not merely one-dimensional, but a full-fledged affair in which multiple of ourselves seem stimulated, our physical body as well as our intellect.

—Major Jackson

I much prefer working with kids whose life could be completely upended by a reading of a book over a weekend. You give them a book to read—they go home and come back a changed person. And that is so much more interesting and exciting.

--Russell Banks

It is a great thing to start life with a small number of really good books which are your very own. You may not appreciate them at first. You may pine for your novel of crude and unadulterated adventure. You may, and will, give it the preference when you can. But the dull days come, and the rainy days come, and always you are driven to fill up the chinks of your reading with the worthy books which wait so patiently for your notice. And then suddenly, on a day which marks an epoch in your life, you understand the difference. You see, like a flash, how the one stands for nothing, and the other for literature. From that day onwards you may return to your crudities, but at least you do so with some standard of comparison in your mind. You can never be the same as you were before. Then gradually the good thing becomes more dear to you; it builds itself up with your growing mind; it becomes a part of your better self, and so, at last, you can look, as I do now, at the old covers and love them for all that they have meant in the past.

--Arthur Conan Doyle

At first the words, without pictures, were a mystery. But then, suddenly, they all began to march across the page. They gave up their secret meanings, spoke of other worlds, made me know that pain was a part of other people's lives. After a while, I could read faster and faster and faster and faster. After a while, I no longer believed in the world in which I lived.

When I was in my early teens, I started with the first book on the bottom shelf and went through the lot, one by one. I didn't read a few books. I read the Detroit Public Library.

--Thomas Edison

Siberia. That was in the library. There, in that muddy village, was a great institution. Not physically, to be sure, but in every other way imaginable. It was a small log cabin, immaculately attended to with loving care; it was well lighted with oil lamps and it was warm. But best of all, it contained a small but amazing collection from the world's best literature, truly amazing considering the time, the place, and its size. From floor to ceiling it was lined with books—books, books, books. It was there that I was to become acquainted with the works of Dumas, Pasternak's translations of Shakespeare, the novels of Mark Twain, Jack London, and of course the Russians. It was in that log cabin that I escaped from Siberia—either reading there or taking the books home. It was between that library and two extraordinary teachers that I developed a lifelong passion for the great Russian novelists and poets. It was there that I learned to line up patiently for my turn to sit at a table and read, to wait—sometimes months—for a book. It was there that I learned that reading was not only a great delight, but a privilege.

—Esther Hautzig



I loved the Colored Branch of the Carnegie Public Library.

--James Alan McPherson

I started reading. I read everything I could get my hands on...By the time I was thirteen I had read myself out of Harlem. I had read every book in two libraries and had a card for the Forty-Second Street branch.

--James Baldwin

It was a pity that most people didn't actually go to libraries anymore, not when they could sit in the comfort of their own quarters and access files electronically. Want to read the new hot interstellar caper novel, or the latest issue of *Beings* holozine? Input the name, touch a control, and zip— it's in your datapad. . . .

There were, of course, old-fashioned beings who would still actually trundle down to where the files were. On some worlds the most ancient libraries kept books—actual bound volumes of printed matter—lined up neatly on shelves, and readers would walk the aisles, take a volume down, sniff the musty-dusty odor of it, and then carry it to a table to leisurely peruse.

There weren't many of those readers left, and they were growing rarer all the time . . . But there were some who still knew how to actually turn a page—and for those who were willing to do so, the rewards could be great indeed.

—Michael Reaves and  
Steve Perry

The list of gifted teachers and librarians who find their jobs in jeopardy for defending their students' right to read, to imagine, to question, grows every year.

—Judy Blume

Every new medium of communication has in its time aroused anxiety—the cinema, radio, and at one time (a chastening thought) even reading. Now it is the turn of television.

—H. Himmelweit, S. N.  
Oppenheim, and  
P. Price (1958)

Woe is me...because less than 3 percent of you people read books! Because less than 15 percent of you read newspapers! Because the only truth you know is what you get over this tube.

--Peter Finch as Howard  
Beale, in *Network*

Read a good book every day. Books help to educate the soul. The mere joy of learning something new will instill the will to live in you.

—Sanchita Pandey

The taste for good reading is inseparable from a taste for good thinking.

—Edward O. Sisson

Travel stories teach geography; insect stories lead the child into natural science; and so on. The teacher, in short, can use reading to introduce her pupils to the most varied subjects; and the moment they have been thus started, they can go on to any limit guided by the single passion for reading.

—Maria Montessori

This morning I was getting ready for work when I heard my toddler calling, awake ahead of her normal time and sounding none too patient about it. I found her standing with her little fists wrapped tightly around the gate in her doorway. She brightened as I lifted her into a hug, but then her scowl returned. ‘Where’s my book?’ she demanded, turning to point at her pillow, where indeed I’d removed her latest favorite late the night before so she didn’t wake to a hardcover in the eye. ‘It was right there!’ I had to smile. Never had I been so happy to see her so irate. I think we all can appreciate just how young the love of good storytelling can start—and how much a part of our lives it can become, at any age.

—Jessica Strawser

Stories serve multiple purposes. At a basic level they are great entertainment, which is essential for living a happy and healthy life, but on a deeper level stories help us explore issues that are otherwise difficult to address. On one hand a good book helps us escape our troubles, and on the other hand it can help us face up to those troubles by bringing real issues to the fore, often in a more manageable way, since the problems are experienced vicariously through the eyes of another.

—Dean F. Wilson

Struggling adolescent readers are in danger of dropping out of high school, being unprepared for college and putting their future lifetime earnings at risk. 70% of high school dropouts have poor reading skills. 60% of middle and high school students read below proficient level. 37% of high school seniors are ready for college-level work. 1.3 million students drop out of high school each year. School dropouts cost \$240 billion in social services and lost taxes.

—*Voyager Sopris  
Learning*

Reading ability is directly related to earnings potential. Projected annual salaries: \$24,492 for high school dropouts; \$33,904 for high school graduates; \$55,432 for college graduates.

—*Voyager Sopris  
Learning* (2017)

In fourth grade, I learned that reading was serious business, not just a pleasant way to pass the time, and that like medicine or engineering, it had a definite, valuable purpose: to foster ‘comprehension.’

—Walter Kirn

We live in a world where it is completely the norm to worry about what we put in our bodies but worry very little about what we throw in our minds. We think a hamburger is bad but a celebrity gossip magazine is completely harmless. As children you never hear ‘don’t put that garbage in your mind,’ but for our body counterpart it is common thread. There is something very wrong with this scenario.

—Evan Sutter

Kids who are trying to ‘make it’ in a broken home need to read books about other kids who face similar situations. They need to know that they are not alone in their experiences—that others feel pain and anger, loneliness and frustration....They can learn the possible alternatives that exist by seeing what others (even fictional ‘others’) do. In this way they may realize that they do have lives of their own independent of their parents.

—Beverly Haley

Someone mentioned therapy to me once. I read a book instead.

—Jayden Hunter

People don’t realize how a man’s whole life can be changed by one book.

—Malcolm X

And really, the basis, I think, of achieving some success in what I want to do today comes from my mother’s push to get me to read and to make something of myself from the standpoint of an education.

--Sam Donaldson

The single biggest predictor of high academic achievement and high ACT scores is reading to children. Not flash cards, not workbooks, not fancy preschools, not blinking toys or computers, but Mom or Dad taking the time every day or night (or both) to sit and read them wonderful books.

—*First Grade Fun Times*

I'm not addicted to reading. I can quit as soon as I finish one more chapter.

—Internet Meme

TV was entertainment of the last resort. There was nothing on during the day in the summer other than game shows and soap operas. Besides, a TV-watching child was considered available for chores: take out the trash, clean your room, pick up that mess, fold those towels, mow the lawn... the list was endless. We all became adept at chore-avoidance. Staying out of sight was a reliable strategy. Drawing or painting was another: to my mother, making art trumped making beds. A third chore-avoidance technique was to read. A kid with his or her nose in a book is a kid who is not fighting, yelling, throwing, breaking things, bleeding, whining, or otherwise creating a Mom-size headache. Reading a book was almost like being invisible—a good thing for all concerned.

— Pete Hautman

Then there were long, lazy summer afternoons when there was nothing to do but read. And dream. And watch the town go by to supper. I think that is why our great men and women so often have sprung from small towns, or villages. They have had time to dream in their adolescence. No cars to catch, no matinees, no city streets, none of the teeming, empty, energy-consuming occupations of the city child. Little that is competitive, much that is unconsciously absorbed at the most impressionable period, long evenings for reading, long afternoons in the fields or woods.

— Edna Ferber

One benefit of Summer was that each day we had more light to read by.

--Jeannette Walls

October is crisp days and cool nights, a time to curl up around the dancing flames and sink into a good book.

—John Sinor

It is winter proper; the cold weather, such as it is, has come to stay. I bloom indoors in the winter like a forced forsythia; I come in to come out. At night I read and write, and things I have never understood become clear; I reap the harvest of the rest of the year's planting.

The woods are acres of sticks: I could walk to the Gulf of Mexico in a straight line. When the leaves fall, the striptease is over; things stand mute and revealed. Everywhere skies extend, vistas deepen, walls become windows, doors open.

--Annie Dillard

Reading books is like wearing winter clothes; it covers and warms up the body of your naked soul.

--Munia Khan

Judith stood before her little library in the dark November dawn, with a candle in her hand, scanning the familiar titles with weary eyes.... these last few days she had taken to waking at dawn, to lying for hours wide-eyed in her little white bed, while the slow day grew. But to-day it was intolerable, she could bear it no longer.... She would try a book; not a very hopeful remedy in her own opinion, but one which [those] who were troubled by sleeplessness, regarded, she knew, as the best thing under the circumstances.

—Amy Levy

I will defend the importance of bedtime stories to my last gasp.

—J. K. Rowlings

Children fall in love with books because of the memories created when they snuggle up and read with someone they love.

—*www.raisingreaders.org*

I don't have many friends, not the living, breathing sort at any rate. And I don't mean that in a sad and lonely way; I'm just not the type of person who accumulates friends or enjoys crowds. I'm good with words, but not spoken kind; I've often thought what a marvelous thing it would be if I could only conduct relationships on paper. And I suppose, in a sense, that's what I do, for I've hundreds of the other sort, the friends contained within bindings, pages after glorious pages of ink, stories that unfold the same way every time but never lose their joy, that take me by the hand and lead me through doorways into worlds of great terror and rapturous delight. Exciting, worthy, reliable companions—full of wise counsel, some of them—but sadly ill-equipped to offer the use of a spare bedroom for a month or two.

— Kate Morton

When I think of early friendships, I think not of people but of books. Books were my friends, and more often than not, the characters in the books were my imaginary friends, who stepped out of the pages and walked with me to school or sat in bed with me, talking when I was meant to be asleep. What I mean is reading was my friends. And also I mean that I learned about friendship—patience, slowness, listening, care—from reading and from reading about friendship between people.

—Erin Wunker

It is when we are faced with death that we turn most bookish.

—Jules Renard

A library is a good place to go when you feel unhappy, for there, in a book, you may find encouragement and comfort. A library is a good place to go when you feel bewildered or undecided, for there, in a book, you may have your question answered. Books are good company, in sad times and happy times, for books are people—people who have managed to stay alive by hiding between the covers of a book.

—E. B. White

I can imagine no greater bliss than to lie about, reading novels all day.

—Julia Quinn

Hey, great idea: if you have kids, give your partner reading vouchers next Christmas. Each voucher entitles the bearer to two hours' reading time \*while the kids are awake\*. It might look like a cheapskate present, but parents will appreciate that it costs more in real terms than a Lamborghini.

--Nick Hornby

I grew up without a television. It meant that I read lots of books.

—Emily Watson

Old wood best to burn, old wine to drink, old friends to trust, and old authors to read.

—Francis Bacon

A truly great book should be read in youth, again in maturity and once more in old age, as a fine building should be seen by morning light, at noon and by moonlight.

—Robertson Davies

Reading is for pleasure; it's not another form of social competition. Leave those literary Joneses to it.

--Heather Reyes

If the ability to read carries the average man no higher than the gossip of his neighbours, if he asks nothing more nourishing out of books and the theatre than he gets hanging about the store, the bar and the street-corner, then culture is bound to be dragged down to him instead of his being lifted up by culture.

--Edith Wharton

## STORY TELLING

Most every night when they're in bed,  
And both their little prayers have said,  
They shout for me to come upstairs  
And tell them tales of gypsies bold,  
And eagles with the claws that hold  
A baby's weight, and fairy sprites  
That roam the woods on starry nights.  
And I must illustrate these tales,  
Must imitate the northern gales  
That toss the native man's canoe,  
And show the way he paddles, too.  
If in the story comes a bear,  
I have to pause and sniff the air  
And show the way he climbs the trees  
To steal the honey from the bees.  
And then I buzz like angry bees  
And sting him on his nose and knees  
And howl in pain, till mother cries:  
'That pair will never shut their eyes,  
While all that noise up there you make;  
You're simply keeping them awake.'  
And then they whisper: 'Just one more,'  
And once again I'm forced to roar.  
New stories every night they ask.  
And that is not an easy task;  
I have to be so many things,  
The frog that croaks, the lark that sings,  
The cunning fox, the frightened hen;  
But just last night they stumped me, when  
They wanted me to twist and squirm  
And imitate an angle worm.  
At last, they tumble off to sleep,  
And softly from their room I creep  
And brush and comb the shock of hair  
I tossed about to be a bear.  
Then mother says: 'Well, I should say  
You're just as much a child as they.'  
But you can bet I'll not resign  
That story telling job of mine.

--Edgar A. Guest

Reading is solitude. One reads alone, even in another's presence.

--Italo Calvino

The main vehicle for nineteenth-century socialization was the leading textbook used in elementary school. They were so widely used that sections in them became part of the national language. Theodore Roosevelt, scion of an elite New York family, schooled by private tutors, had been raised on the same textbooks as the children of Ohio farmers, Chicago tradesman, and New England fishermen. If you want to know what constituted being a good American from the mid-nineteenth century to World War I, spend a few hours browsing through the sections in the McGuffey Readers.

--Charles Murray

One cannot read a book: one can only reread it. A good reader, a major reader, an active and creative reader is a rereader. And I shall tell you why. When we read a book for the first time the very process of laboriously moving our eyes from left to right, line after line, page after page, this complicated physical work upon the book, the very process of learning in terms of space and time what the book is about, this stands between us and artistic appreciation. When we look at a painting we do not have to move our eyes in a special way even if, as in a book, the picture contains elements of depth and development. The element of time does not really enter in a first contact with a painting. In reading a book, we must have time to acquaint ourselves with it. We have no physical organ (as we have the eye in regard to a painting) that takes in the whole picture and can enjoy its details. But at a second, or third, or fourth reading we do, in a sense, behave towards a book as we do towards a painting. However, let us not confuse the physical eye, that monstrous achievement of evolution, with the mind, an even more monstrous achievement. A book, no matter what it is—a work of fiction or a work of science (the boundary line between the two is not as clear as is generally believed)—a book of fiction appeals first of all to the mind. The mind, the brain, the top of the tingling spine, is, or should be, the only instrument used upon a book.

—Vladimir Nabokov

Give at least fifteen minutes everyday to reading. Sometimes, we spend a lot of time watching television—surfing through channels; not really watching anything in particular. Fifteen minutes out of that time is not a big deal. Soon you will find yourself reading for more than fifteen minutes. Soon you will find yourself turning to a book when you need to relax. Soon you will realize that reading a book heals you in a way you never imagined possible.

--Arti Honrao



Reading is an intimate act, perhaps more intimate than any other human act. I say that because of the prolonged (or intense) exposure of one mind to another.

--Harold Brodkey

To become a 'good reader' one must give oneself over to a regime of concentrated pleasure. One does not set out to read a book a day (there is no necessary pleasure in that) but may spend two or three years on one book [ . . . ], read only portions of another, devour a third at a single sitting.

--Michael Schmidt

I would never attempt to dissuade anyone from reading a book. But please, if you're reading something that's killing you, put it down and read something else, just as you would reach for the remote if you weren't enjoying a TV program...All I know is that you can get very little from a book that is making you weep with the effort of reading it. You won't remember it, and you'll be less likely to choose a book over [insert popular contemporary TV program] next time you have a choice.

--Nick Hornby

People don't read to enlighten themselves or seek to gain some valuable insight into their own psychology. People read to escape.

--Dermot Davis

He had some taste for romance reading before he went to the university, where, we must confess, in justice to his college, he was cured of the love of reading in all its shapes.

--Thomas Love Peacock

Read sometimes for the story, Bobby. Don't be like the book-snobs who won't do that. Read sometimes for the words—the language. Don't be like the play-it-safers that won't do that. But when you find a book that has both good story and good words, treasure that book.

--Stephen King

Reading is a time machine that allows you to acquire wisdom from the past and to analyze and imagine another person's vision of the future.

--Joshua Rogers

Reading books is a way for you to communicate with and learn from the best thinkers that are writing today and that have ever lived.

--Joshua Roge

It is right that you should read according to your temperament, occupations, hobbies, and vocations. But it is a sign of great inner insecurity to be hostile to the unfamiliar, unwilling to explore the unfamiliar. In science, we respect the research worker. In literature, we should not always read the books blessed by the majority.

--Anais Nin

They were readers for whom literature was a drug, each complex plot line delivering a new high, suspending them above reality, allowing them a magical crossover...They had spoken often, with rueful honesty, of how the books they read represented escape, offered pathways to literary landscapes that intrigued and engrossed...From childhood on, books had been the hot air balloons that carried them above the angry mutterings of quarreling parents, schoolyard rejections, academic boredom...They were of a kind, readers from birth.

--Gloria Goldreich

'Read the great books, gentlemen,' Mr. Monte said one day. 'Just the great ones. Ignore the others. There's not enough time.'

--Pat Conroy

No story is the same to us after a lapse of time; or rather we who read it are no longer the same interpreters.

—George Eliot

I look around and see that many—not all, but many—problems we've got could be solved if our culture simply fostered the habit of reading. Reading books of science, philosophy, history. Reading literature of quality, the sort that touches us because of a more profound reason, such as, for instance, because it's got something to say beyond all the futilities and trifles of life, even while depicting the ordinary in life, at the same time that it says it with style, in a unique, admirable manner. An original one.

We are not a county of readers, notwithstanding. We are the country of football turned into a cult, of guile being ranked high as a cardinal virtue, of Carnival made for exportation. A country where there are more letters in political party acronyms than in all many of our politicians have written in a lifetime. A country where ethics has become a joke theme. Where democracy is but a ridiculous puppet theatre.

Yes, I look around and see that many problems could be solved if we had the habit of reading. But I am not even sure whether there is someone reading these words.

--Camilo Gomes Jr.

Reading Chekhov, I felt not happy, exactly, but as close to happiness as I knew I was likely to come. And it occurred to me that this was the pleasure and mystery of reading, as well as the answer to those who say that books will disappear. For now, books are still the best way of taking great art and its consolations along with us on a bus.

--Francine Prose

In a study at Emory University in Atlanta, subjects read at night and underwent MRI scans of their brain each morning. The scans showed increased connectivity in the part of the brain associated with language. Most interesting to researchers: The neural changes persisted for five days after participants finished the book.

—Ken Budd

Reading is essential to communication, especially in an era of emails and texting. Beyond even that, though, reading has an array of crucial purposes. It will help improve your grades and test scores. You'll learn about other places, other times, and other cultures. You'll encounter issues you can relate to—issues that speak to you and challenge you to think and feel in new ways. You will grow, empathetically and intellectually. Plus, you'll understand more of the references that crop up all the time in pop culture.

—<https://blog.prepscholar.com/books-to-read-in-high-school>

Ways to use children's literature in the classroom are as varied as the books, teachers, and children in it. Reading aloud is still the best-known and probably the best-liked method of sharing books. Jenny, a sixth-grader recently reported, 'The best part of school is when Mrs. Tussy closes the door and reads to us. Sometimes she reads and until 10 o'clock!' The amount of time spent on reading aloud changes with grade level, with more time spent in kindergarten and primary grades than in middle grades. The choices of reading material change as students grown in age and experience, but the purposes remain the same: students and teachers share an intellectual or emotional happening; they experience together a special use of language; they add to their common background of knowledge

—Alice K. Swinger

'Popular choice' books are often formulaic writings, seem easier to read and understand, and provide exciting stories or well-talked about subjects. The books are useful in a number of ways, including keeping readers reading and in bringing information to readers not easily found elsewhere. Including popular choice books along with the quality works of literature supports the philosophy that 'the more you read, the better you read.'

—Donna Bessant

We have an obligation to read aloud to our children. To read them things they enjoy. To read to them stories we are already tired of. To do the voices, to make it interesting, and not to stop reading to them just because they learn to read to themselves.

—Neil Gaiman

Don't read in bed...you need to be alert, with your senses sharp. When you read in bed you're courting sleep—and you'll blame it on the book when you start nodding off.

—Steve Allen

When you read, you never see the letters; you see the things the letters are about, like a forest, a house turned into a library, or a pharmacy. Books serve as mirrors and windows—they're full of images.

—Juan Villoro

Schools do not take the job of teaching reading lightly. They realize that literacy is the key to success in modern society. Educators are also profoundly aware that many social ills can be attributed to failure in schools and are constantly striving to improve their instructional techniques.

—Cheryl Vitali

Excellent teachers make reading come alive for students. For example, a second-grade teacher turned her classroom into a campground to enhance instruction and vocabulary. My mother exposed my sisters and me to literacy by reading fascinating Native American history and legends as we traveled the country. She made memorable connections as indelible as the landscape of the Southwest. Reading could carry us as far as our imaginations would go. Literacy requires human contact. Children need the ability to manipulate letters, symbols, and words to develop ideas and create active connections. They need to be encouraged to play with the language.

—Cheryl Vitali

For those who truly know the passions of reading, favorite books provide an outlet for the mind when it's in overload. They convey a sense of what's right about life; they bring reality home; they champion the notion that chivalry lives; they soothe the emotional wound. They give rise to problems and situations which are similar to our own concerns, and then they provide solutions to the safety of the story and it's characters.

—Jeanneine P. Jones

Reading, to the young adolescent, is often synonymous with time wasted.

—Jeanneine P. Jones

Although book lists go against my teacherly instincts, I think we could come up with some sort of point system for renewing educators' contracts and certifying congressmen as eligible to stand for reelection: one point, say, for Steve Garvey's autobiography or for books by Dick Francis, John Grisham, and Erma Bombeck; five points for Anne Tyler, Tobias Wolff, and Edward Hoagland; 10 points for Stephen Jay Gould, David Halberstam, Gore Vidal, and Kelvin Trilling; 15 points for books in a foreign language, books on modern physics and mathematics, poetry books, and Edward Abbey.

We could argue about how many points dead authors are worth. I worry about people who scream for something they call standards in the schools and then try to convince kids that the only good author is one who's been dead at least 100 years. I'd also award bonus points for familiarity with Squirrel Nutkin, Miss Nelson, Max, the Scroobius Pip, Henry and Mudge, The Stupids, Ramona, Madeline, Eloise, Amelia Bedelia, The Cat in the Hat, The Pinballs, Anastasia, and the hundreds of their literary fellows.

—Susan Ohanian

As a longtime teacher I reject both the position of the cultural absolutists, who think every ninth-grader should read *Great Expectations*, and that of the laissez-faire-ists, who pretend that reading about Nancy Drew has the same value as reading about Anna Karenina. Chanting the mantra 'It doesn't matter what they read, just so long as the read' works only in the very short term. It works only to hook reluctant readers on books. Once a teacher has set her hook, then she must nudge, prod, and entice readers into meatier fare. To pretend that it doesn't matter what people read is to say that they are not capable of growth, that they aren't worthy of intellectual challenge and discovery.

—Susan Ohanian

I like to tell the story of the first book club order I placed for the third-graders in that bottom reading group. In September I had to order seven books myself to make the minimum order of 10, and two of the student orders were for posters. In January the book club offered an Amelia Bedelia book. My students ordered 48 copies. They ordered for themselves, for their cousins, for their neighbors. When Leslie got her copy, she clutched it to her chest and burst into tears. 'I'm so happy,' she kept blubbering. When Charles got his, this troubled boy, who is mainstreamed into my class from a sheltered setting for the emotionally disturbed, opened it to the title page and stared for a long time. 'This is mine, right? That means I can write my name right here—that way you do in your books.'

—Susan Ohanian

All of us, whether we teach high school or first grade, need to grapple with...issues of literary content and merit because we aren't teaching for today, we're teaching for the future. I was Denise's English teacher for a long time. Denise, a student so recalcitrant she failed seventh grade twice, still writes to me. She tells me about taking her own children to the library every week. She says her kids like *Flat Stanley* almost as much as I do. Denise writes about introducing her children to the Stupids, and Frog and Toad, and to Madeline. She writes, 'I can't wait until they're old enough for my favorite book. You know what that is. *The Great Gilly Hopkins*.'

I like to think that the Denise's children will be readers because in being the reader myself I was able to help Denise become one. A belligerent, foul-mouthed teenager, Denise found a soul mate in Gilly; Gilly helped her look at the world and at herself in new ways. I have a letter Denise wrote me in October of ninth grade. She reported she was doing pretty well in school; she'd been suspended only twice. Need I add that the Denise was innocent of irony? She wrote that she was trying to decide whether to become a teacher or a bartender.

A year later, in 10th grade, she limited her options by dropping out of school. But she left school with something she learned in her long stay in seventh grade; she dropped out with the knowledge that books could enrich her life.

—Susan Ohanian

Research studies through the years have given ample support of the fact that students who read more become better readers. In classrooms where literature is readily accessible, or sufficient time is given to reading and where teachers place a high value on reading, students can be found engaged in reading for pleasure and information.

—Shane Templeton

Candidates for school board should be hooked up to a lie detector and asked if he's read a book from start to finish since graduating from high school.

—Kurt Vonnegut

I cannot understate the ability to handle classical texts such as Shakespeare.

—Louise Jameson

I'm thankful for the Harry Potter series for a lot of reasons, but mostly because it has gotten many, many kids reading—and continues to do so. To me that's the greatest thing any book can do. Reading saves lives, and that series saved thousands of them. It's why I write children's books myself.

—James Patterson

## SURPRISING BOOK FACTS

33% of High School Graduates never read another book the rest of their lives.

42% of college grads never read another book after college.

57% of new books are not read to completion.

70% of U.S. adults have not been in a bookstore the last five years.

80% of U.S. families did not buy or read a book last year.

The more a child reads, the likelier they are able to understand the emotions of others.

—*Vintage Books & Anchor  
Books*

We all act as independent learners in charge of designing our autodidactic curricula. Reading the books written by the prophetic genius of history including the literary masterpieces and philosophical treatises awakens the mind. Reading can act as a gateway drug leading to writing and expansion of a personal state of conscious awareness.

--Kilroy J. Oldster

The reading of great books has been a life-altering activity to me.

--Pat Conroy

Because we are human we have a long childhood, and one of the jobs of that childhood is to sculpt our brains. We have years—about twelve of them—to draw outlines of the shape we want our sculpted brain to take. Some of the parts must be sculpted at critical times. One cannot, after all, carve out toes unless he knows where the foot will go. We need tools to do some of the fine work. The tools are our childhood experiences. And I'm convinced that one of those experiences must be children's books. And they must be experienced within the early years of our long childhood.

—E. L. Konigsburg

It would be fairer to say I have traveled widely, without ever leaving my own native soil, I've traveled, one might say, through literature, each time I've opened a book the pages echoed with a noise like the dip of a paddle in midstream, and throughout my odyssey I never crossed a single border, and so never had to produce a passport, I'd just pick a destination at random, setting my prejudices firmly to one side, and be welcomed with open arms in places swarming with weird and wonderful characters.

--Alain Mabanckou

Reading literature is one of the few ways I am able to see the world through someone else's point of view and learn how and why they feel the way they do. When it works, and works well, it can create empathy and understanding in a powerful way.

—Jennifer March  
Soloway

This was the curse of the voracious reader, she realized. Real life never quite measured up to the heightened and precise contours of her literary worlds. A real war was never as true as a fictive one.

--Reif Larsen

Every readable novel can give true pleasure. Every novel read by choice is read because it gives true pleasure.

--Ursula K. Le Guin

People who love literature have at least part of their minds immune from indoctrination. If you read, you can learn to think for yourself.

—Doris Lessing

When you re-read a classic you do not see in the book more than you did before. You see more in you than there was before.

—Clifton Fadiman

The middle school years are often fraught with crises: physically, students see the migration of body parts from children's proportions to adult sizes; emotionally, they experience the full panoply of human response from anger to delight in heightened decibels; and socially, they believe that there is too much time or not enough time to develop the important relationships of life. In the midst of their busy lives while searching for the right mix of physical, emotional and social stability, young adolescents can sometimes find in good literature a calm space necessary for balance.

—Donna Bessant

'Popular choice' books are often formulaic writings, seem easier to read and understand, and provide exciting stories or well-talked about subjects. The books are useful in a number of ways, including keeping readers reading and in bringing information to readers not easily found elsewhere. Including popular choice books along with the quality works of literature supports the philosophy that 'the more you read, the better you read.'

—Donna Bessant



I travel to the ancient world by reading ancient books.

--Lailah Gifty Akita

Why is it? In school we learn one of the most amazing and difficult feats man has ever accomplished—how to read—and at the same time we learn to hate to read the things worth reading most!

It's happened to us all—with assignment reading! It happened to me. The teacher assigned *Moby Dick*. I didn't want to read it. So I fought it. I disliked it. I thought I won.

But I lost. My struggles to keep at arms length from *Moby Dick* cost me all the good things that can come from learning to come to terms with those special few books we call the 'classics.'

—Steve Allen

English teacher Jeff Newton has one rule for his students at Spotswood High School in Rockingham County, Va. You are not allowed to read a book you do not like. Students have a hard time believing this rule, Newton says, so he keeps it posted at the front of his classroom. He insists that books read without passion are hardly worth reading at all. That is why, in Newton's classroom, paperback books of every kind—fiction, nonfiction, poetry, young adult, contemporary, the classics—offer something to interest every student. Believing that he could reach all his students with the right books, Newton persuaded his district language arts supervisor to purchase trade books instead of new literature anthologies when their textbooks were up for adoption.

Now, instead of five-pound literature books, Newton's students can choose from more than 700 paperbacks in his classroom library. 'If we want kids to be readers, let's give them real books,' he suggests. To ignite the reading passion, you start with what they will read. This doesn't mean that I don't cajole, nudge, coax, or sometimes stick their face in a book that I think will grab them, but my primary goal is to create readers so that they keep reading when they're out of school, Newton explains. Students who don't develop the pleasure-reading habit simply don't have a chance.

—Larry Mann

I ate them like salad, books were my sandwich for lunch, my tiffin and dinner and midnight munch. I tore out the pages, ate them with salt, doused them with relish, gnawed on the bindings, turned the chapters with my tongue! Books by the dozen, the score and the billion. I carried so many home I was hunchbacked for years. Philosophy, art history, politics, social science, the poem, the essay, the grandiose play, you name 'em, I ate 'em.

—Ray Bradbury

Free time is a terrible thing to waste. Read a book.

—E.A. Bucchianeri

What is childhood without stories? And how will children fall in love with stories without bookstores? You can't get that from a computer.

--Sarah Jio

A book burrows into your life in a very profound way because the experience of reading is not passive.

—Erica Jong

Because so many people use *Goodreads*, it is an amazingly good—and amazingly underutilized—resource for understanding what people read, why, and how they feel about their reading experiences.

— John Green

One glance at a book and you hear the voice of another person, perhaps someone dead for 1,000 years. To read is to voyage through time.

—Carl Sagan

Words can be like X-rays if you use them properly—they'll go through anything. You read and you're pierced.

—Aldous Huxley

To learn to read is to light a fire; every syllable that is spelled out is a spark.

—Victor Hugo

Dialect [plays] a significant and unrecognized role in the reading achievement of millions of children—and very likely contribute[s] to the persistence of the black-white gap in test scores....Like speakers of any nonstandard dialectic, from the Swiss German to Cypriot Greek, most speakers of African-American English do learn to code-switch naturally, some starting in kindergarten, then we see a big wave at the end of first grade and another at the end of second. Then you get to third grade and it's over. At that point, about a third of them still can't speak the standard dialect, and the code-switching isn't going to happen unless you teach it. We know these kids will have trouble. By the end of fourth grade, switching students—that is, students who are proficient in both their home dialect and standard English—score at least a full academic year ahead of their non-switching classmates in reading.

—William Brennan

In just the last few years, ‘machine learning’ has come to seem like the new path forward. Algorithms, freed from human programmers, are training themselves on massive data sets and producing results that have shocked even optimists in the field. Earlier this year, two AIs—one created by the Chinese company Alibaba the other by Microsoft—beat a team of two-legged competitors in a Stanford reading-comprehension test. The algorithms read a series of Wikipedia entries on things like the rise of Genghis Khan and the Apollo space program and then answered a series of questions about them more accurately than people did. One Alibaba scientist declared the victory a ‘milestone.’

—Stepfan Talty

Percentage of people who read for pleasure or self-fulfillment on a typical day, according to a just-released U.S. government survey.

Ages 15-24	9.4%
Ages 25-34	12%
Ages 35-44	13.9%
Ages 45-54	15.3%
Ages 55-64	25.5%
Ages 65+	38.3%

—AARP *Bulletin* (2018)

The faculty of attention has utterly vanished from the Anglo-Saxon mind, extinguished at its source by the big bayadère of journalism, of the newspaper and the picture magazine which keeps screaming, ‘Look at me.’ Illustrations, loud simplifications... bill poster advertising—only these stand a chance.

—Henry James

The home is the child’s first school, the parent is the child’s first teacher, and reading is the child’s first subject.

—Barbara Bush

Why is it these days that so many people hate reading? Some people won’t even touch a newspaper or magazine. It isn’t television that kills reading, or cinema or radio, or even those accursed little things known as video games. People used to read all the time, but when the century shifted subtly, somewhere along the way, people forgot how to imagine. When did it happen? At what point? Who or what is to blame? Maybe it’s just because the world has become so cold and scientific and shallow in recent years.

--Rebecca McNutt

The worst part of it has been, I think, the adverse effect on family life. It kills off family conversation. And it's harder to get your children to read books. I became a confirmed reader when I was growing up in Glendale. I've loved reading all my life. Now I've got this daughter, Aissa, a very bright young lady—but it is a hard job to get her to read. Television's just too easy.

--John Wayne

Reading is different, reading is something you do. With TV, and cinema for that matter, everything's handed to you on a plate, nothing has to be worked at, they just spoon-feed you. The picture, the sound, the scenery, the atmospheric music in case you haven't understood what the director's on about... The creaking door that tells you to be stiff. You have to imagine it all when you're reading.

--Daniel Pennac

Do you ever think about how weird reading is? Our eyes are able to scan these different symbols and construct the scenarios and concepts they describe in our mind. And these concepts have the power to twist our emotions and make us cry and laugh and—wow reading is weird.

—Internet Meme

News works like a drug. As stories develop, we want to know how they continue. With hundreds of arbitrary storylines in our heads, this craving is increasingly compelling and hard to ignore. Scientists used to think that the dense connections formed among the 100 billion neurons inside our skulls were largely fixed by the time we reached adulthood. Today we know that this is not the case. Nerve cells routinely break old connections and form new ones. The more news we consume, the more we exercise the neural circuits devoted to skimming and multitasking while ignoring those used for reading deeply and thinking with profound focus. Most news consumers—even if they used to be avid book readers— have lost the ability to absorb lengthy articles or books. After four, five pages they get tired, their concentration vanishes, they become restless. It's not because they got older or their schedules became more onerous. It's because the physical structure of their brains has changed.

—Rolf Dobelli

Reading involves thinking and feeling. The stories that are remembered long after they are read, the stories that are read over and over again, the stories that reveal something new with each reading—these are literature of merit. These are the stories that touch the heart and introduce children to a lifetime of reading.

—Theodore Clymer

The flood of print has turned reading into a process of gulping rather than savoring.  
—Warren Chappell

The serious reader in the age of technology is a rebel by definition: a protester without a placard, a Luddite without hammer or bludgeon. She reads on planes to picket the antiseptic nature of modern travel, on commuter trains to insist on individualism in the midst of the herd, in hotel rooms to boycott the circumstances that separate her from her usual sources of comfort and stimulation, during office breaks to escape from the banal conversation of office mates, and at home to revolt against the pervasive and mind-deadening irrelevance of television.

--Eric Burns

School reading supports blaming the victim. Instead of taking professional responsibility for developing more powerful pedagogy, teachers and teacher educators use students' poor reading as an excuse. Having swallowed the premise that youngsters cannot be taught any subject without having obtained the appropriate reading level for their grade level, educators generally accept the current discourse and research on failure. Poverty, poorly educated parents, family breakdown, and drug abuse can all be correlated with the reading level and transformed into the causes of school failure.

—Martin Haberman

Why do middle level students seem to read less during their leisure time than they did in elementary school? How can educators motivate reluctant adolescents to read?

The decrease in adolescent reading may be due to several factors, including:

- Increased interest in socializing
- Problems tackling more difficult reading materials
- Peers' negative opinions about the appropriateness of reading.

Getting to know individual learners—their reading and interest levels and their reading preferences—undoubtedly helps motivate them to read.

—M. Lee Manning

Those students who experience difficulty in our freshman sequence do so not because they have not previously read particular works but rather because they are deficient in analytical/interpretive skills, because they do not read expository prose well, because they do not write expository prose well. With respect to belletristic literature, it is more important that students know that they must read a text closely before they begin to interpret them than they know a few works well.

—Professor James  
Quivey

In our democratic society, citizens are expected to keep abreast of the news—tax reform...nuclear accidents, gun control, etc. The newspapers are, therefore, an important reading demand on the adult American—even though most of us get the ‘headlines’ from TV newscasts.

In several research studies conducted for the College Board, newspapers from a number of cities and states were analyzed for text difficulty....The articles on the front page of the newspapers, concerning national and international news, tended to be the most difficult type of article among those analyzed....Articles from the editorial pages were almost as difficult....Articles from the sports pages were, for all papers, easier to read....The conventional wisdom is that newspapers are written at a level somewhere between sixth and ninth grade....Although ability to comprehend at least the surface meaning of the front page of the newspaper would seem a reasonable definition of what a high school graduate ought to be able to read, it is a standard that most current graduates could not meet.

—Lois E. Burrill

Basal reading programs were designed to provide systematic, uniform instruction. Unfortunately, they have also produced ‘management mentality’ in both students and teachers—a mechanical rather than a thoughtful orientation to reading. When reading is extracted from the curriculum and taught as a separate subject, teachers may over-emphasize the skills content of basal readers and fail to link these skills in meaningful ways to literature or other academic areas. Consequently, students may be unmotivated to read stories in the basal materials or to learn vital information.

—Peter Winograd and  
Scott G. Paris

A constraint on reading instruction is the emphasis on academic competition in the classroom. Traditional reading instruction often fosters competition among students. The use of ability groups in reading, for instance, can lead to preferential treatment: more challenging instruction for good readers along with social stigmatization for poor readers. Moreover, the inflexible use of ability groups teaches children that success in reading is measured not by information gained or pleasure experienced, but rather by group membership. This lesson is reinforced by the repeated tests administered in classrooms. Good readers get high scores and good grades; poor readers get low scores and poor grades. As a result, many children come to regard reading as an arena for competition rather than a form of communication.

—Peter Winograd and  
Scott G. Paris

School reading doesn't work. The system doesn't teach people to read, read well, want to read, or to use reading for their own ends. Indeed, it creates millions of casualties: illiterates, semi-illiterates, and those who seldom read—all of whom put themselves and the society as a whole at risk.

—Martin Haberman

Reading is a constructive process. That is, readers construct the meaning of the text through text information and information existing in memory. Thus, background knowledge is...believed to have much stronger implications for comprehension than was previously assumed partly because research has been able to show how knowledge affects comprehension.

—Isabel L. Beck

## 15 BEST PRACTICES IN READING INSTRUCTION

A group of educators from across the state convened to review current reading research and to identify a list of best practices in reading instruction that should be included in a review of a school's literacy plan. These best practices are also used as a basis for the development of literacy leadership for *Best Practices in Reading Administrators' Academies* designed by the *Illinois State Board of Education*.

- Teachers provide explicit instruction to build word knowledge and vocabulary under standing through teaching and modeling different word analysis strategies.
- Assessment information is used to make decisions about instructional practices. Teachers routinely monitor and assess the progress of students and use data to make changes in instruction on an ongoing basis.
- Instructional planning for reading includes activities that take place before, during, and after reading.
- Time is set aside for teachers and administrators to reflect upon instructional practices and collaborate in selecting new learning activities.
- Instruction and assessment activities are aligned with the Illinois Learning Standards, Student Performance Descriptors, and Assessment Frameworks. Teachers integrate test preparation into instructional activities throughout the year.

- Students are given daily opportunities for sustained reading to increase fluency and vocabulary.
- Students are given a wide variety of reading and writing experiences in both fiction and nonfiction.
- Students are provided with reading materials at their appropriate instructional level.
- Students have extensive opportunities to read for a variety of purposes.
- A variety of comprehension strategies are taught and modeled for students to construct meaning through reading.
- Students are taught and given opportunities to synthesize, analyze, evaluate, and make applications of what they read and write to authentic situations.
- Reading and writing activities are integrated to support learning in all content areas.
- Students are provided a literacy-rich environment and opportunities to access print in book and electronic formats.
- Students are provided with instruction on how to read and interpret non-print information, such as pictures, graphs, charts, and other visual displays.
- Families, communities, and schools collaborate to support literacy development of students.

*—Illinois State Board of  
Education*

It's imperative that we focus on adolescent literacy. Historically, we've said if you teach students early, the problem is fixed, but that's not the case. It is important to have students read early, but you can't stop there. Kids fall off the bandwagon when they're not given the skills.

—Iris Bond

Most high school educators are trained in their subject-area disciplines, but they are not trained to understand or teach reading. As a result, many teachers misdiagnose the problems struggling readers face and thus fail to address them. High school ed-



ucators often view a kind of generic reading competence (something they assume students acquire in elementary and middle school) as a prerequisite to including challenging disciplinary texts (beyond the textbook) as part of their instruction. Rather than just ‘generic’ reading ability, however, high school students need to acquire ‘disciplinary literacy,’ or ‘the ability to understand, critique, and use knowledge from texts in a number of different academic content areas.’ The work of the discipline of history, for example, . . . requires the careful and principled examination of a variety of primary source documents, and the ability to both understand and critique the unexamined assumptions found in historical summaries such as those found in history textbooks.

—Carol D. Lee

Efforts to improve adolescent literacy are complicated by the fact that many adolescents are ‘have-to readers’— they can read words and comprehend books and magazines that they read at home on a basic level, but they do not enjoy reading at school and read only when they are told to do so. As a result, these students do not develop enough fluency in their middle and high school years to learn how to enjoy what they read or to get much out of it....To motivate students to read, we have to establish an environment where everybody is reading, reading something they selected themselves, something they are interested in. When kids find topics they are interested in reading, they are more willing to attempt more difficult reading.

—Sheila Whitford

Children are reading less as their lives become more crowded with other activities, new research suggests.

They are reading fewer novels, comics, magazines and websites, according to a National Literacy Trust study of 21,000 children and teenagers.

While many enjoyed reading, some 17% said they would be embarrassed if a friend saw them with a book.

A government spokesman said the findings showed the need to help young people develop a love of reading.

Half of those questioned said they enjoyed reading very much, or quite a lot, almost the same as in 2005 when the figure was 51%.

But the findings showed that just three in every 10 youngsters read daily in their own time, down from four in 10 in 2005.

More than a fifth (22%) said they rarely or never read in their own time and more than half (54%) said they preferred watching television to reading.

In 2005 more than three quarters (77%) of children read magazines, but now only 57% do. Comic reading has dropped from 64% to 50%, and reading on websites from 54% to 50%.

The researchers said the figures highlighted ‘a clear issue with children’s leisure time with many children enjoying reading but pushing it out in favour of other activities’.

—Judith Burns (UK)  
(2012)

Every semester, on the first day of the expository writing class Sven Birkerts teaches at Harvard University, he asks his students to give him written answers to a few brief questions.

He wants to know about their backgrounds, their high school English classes and their outside reading—specifically, how much they read, what they read, and what their favorite books are.

Simple enough. Yet the responses, Birkerts reports, are heartbreaking. In an article titled ‘What, Me Read?’ in a recent issue of *Harvard Magazine*, he explains that almost none of his students read independently.

Their excuses vary: ‘Too busy.’ ‘I wish I had the time!’ ‘I’ve always had a hard time with books that are supposed to be good for me.’

Then, in what might be the ultimate insult to a literature-loving Harvard instructor, some of them proudly admit: ‘If I have the time, I like to relax with Stephen King.’

‘I can’t tell you how many of my best and brightest have written that sentence,’ Birkerts notes sadly. ‘Stephen King, Stephen King, Stephen King. How rarely someone will cite a reputable ‘serious’ book—by Milan Kundera, Vladimir Nabokov, Walker Percy, Anne Tyler, anyone.

Nonfiction, he adds, ‘is *terra incognita*.’

—Marilyn Gardner

The ostensible decline in pleasure reading is often blamed on TV and other technology, but the data offer weak and inconsistent support for that hypothesis, at best. More likely to smother interest is the practice of offering kids rewards for reading. Scores of studies have found that the more we reward people for doing something, the more they come to lose interest in whatever they had to do to get the reward. When the late educational psychologist John Nicholls heard about a program that offers pizza as an inducement for reading books, he said the likely result would be ‘a lot of fat kids who don’t like to read.’

Potential excitement about reading also evaporates as a result of the kind of instruction that focuses on narrow, isolated decoding skills. It doesn’t mean phonics doesn’t matter. It means that learning to ‘break the code’ should be part of the rich

literacy curriculum that has kids reading real stories, not facing endless worksheets and contrived fragments of text harnessed to the skill of the week. (Hence the teacher who was heard saying into a child, “Put that book away and do your reading!”)

—Alfie Kohn

Literacy is a prerequisite to the acquisition of new information and the formulation of new ideas. Almost everything kids learn from the fourth grade on they have to learn by reading and writing. Kids who struggle with the task of reading or writing—through which they must convey what they’ve learned—are unable to show their teachers that they understand.

—Catherine Snow

Perhaps the most frequently repeated advice to parents and early childhood educators is ‘Read to kids.’ The reason I think that’s very good advice is because the kind of talk one engages in when reading to young children and discussing books with them offers many of the comprehension challenges that children will face in reading texts for themselves when they’re older: connecting ideas across paragraphs; understanding realms of knowledge through language; encountering and learning to use more complex vocabulary than you do in normal, spontaneous conversation; and familiarity with some of the conventions that are used in written language but not used in spoken language.

—Catherine Snow

There are all kinds of reasons teaching vocabulary is important. For one, we want kids to know 80,000 words by the time they graduate from high school. If you’re missing a year, if you’re allowing some kids to learn words at a rate that’s only 75 percent as fast as other kids, you accumulate huge differences. Because vocabulary is such a big domain, the accumulation of deficit is a big problem. That’s not at all the case for learning letters or learning sounds or learning spelling rules. So you miss some in first grade? You can get them in second grade. You can’t do that with vocabulary.

By the time middle-class kids with well-educated parents are in the third grade, they probably know 12,000 words. But we don’t have a curriculum in kindergarten for teaching vocabulary, and we don’t have a curriculum in preschool for teaching vocabulary. It’s just something we assume kids vocabulary. It’s just something we assume kids are going to do on their own. Meanwhile, kids of undereducated parents who don’t talk to them very much probably have vocabularies of 4,000 words by the time they’re in third grade—a third as many words as their middle-class peers. That’s why it’s important to start early on with vocabulary development, because you bring disadvantaged children—kids from non-English-speaking families, or kids from families that don’t talk very much—much closer to the developmental

trajectory of the students from highly educated, middle-class families. That is the mechanism for shrinking the achievement gap.

—Catherine Snow

The writing is on the wall—and boys are not reading it at all. Many boys hate to read, especially by the time they get to middle school. It is the flipside to the more-often-heard educational complaint about girls shunning subjects such as math and science.

—Edward L. Kenney

Jonathan Kozol has called it ‘the shame of the nation’: the educational gap between children born poor and children born into affluence. To close that gap, we need to look beyond the hours students spend in class to the hours they spend at home. A 2001 study by Susan Neuman and Donna Celano found that the ratio of books to children in middle income neighborhoods is 13 books to one child, while in low income neighborhoods the ratio is one book to 300 children.

This ‘book gap’ is easier to erase than the more complex barriers involved in poverty. Richard Allington found that giving children 12 books to take home over the summer resulted in gains equal to summer school for lower income children, and had twice the impact of summer school for the poorest of those children.

All this without worksheets, extrinsic rewards, or sitting in a stifling classroom in the middle of July.

Home reading surveys showed that at the beginning of 2nd grade, my students had access to an average of three books at home. Increasing this number to 40 or more books had far-reaching effects. Students’ fluency improved because the children could engage in repeated readings of favorite ‘just right’ books, and parents reported increased time spent reading at home during weekends, holidays, and summer break.

The only incentive for this increase in reading time was intrinsic: the pleasure each child felt in reading his or her own book, beloved as a favorite stuffed animal.

—Justin Minkel

It’s the parents’ job to find books for kids that they’re gonna love. A lot of parents don’t get that. One of my best friends’ wife died when his boys were young, and he did a great job. But it didn’t occur to him that it was his job to find books for the kids.

—James Patterson

Secondary school students are expected to learn independently from print, but no one shows them how. We start to work with kids on stories from the time they’re infants. We read stories to them, and they know the pattern: there’s going to be an ending and a resolution. The kind of texts kids are reading at higher levels—the in-

formational, technical texts—there are patterns in them, too, but the kids are not aware of that and nobody walks them through it.

—Arlene Barry

If I say to students, ‘Go home and read a book chapter and come back tomorrow and I’ll give you a quiz then I’m implying that good reading is like a fairy landing on your shoulder and you just get it. I’m not showing you how to tangle with the text, how to construct meaning.

—Vicki Jacobs

In secondary school, teaching shifts from the process of learning to the content students should learn, leaving teachers with little time to address reading. Even teachers who know how to teach reading in their content areas rarely do so. Thirty-seven states require secondary school teachers to take at least one course in reading, yet studies show that only a small percentage of teachers actually use the strategies they learn. And recent state trends are making it tougher for

—Peggy J. Farber

We’re seduced by this notion that if we could just teach the basics by 4th grade, kids would be able to handle the complex demands of literacy that are required of middle and high school students, and that’s just not going to happen. We have 30 years of statistics that show the problem isn’t only with beginning literacy, yet we front load everything and then the funding just stops.

—Richard Vacca

The level of vocabulary present in adult talk to children who are three and four years old, in the home setting and in preschools, is a strong predictor of the level of vocabulary that child will have attained by second grade. In other words, children who are exposed to more words in their conversations with adults, and more unusual words, tend to develop larger vocabularies....Why does the home environment play such an important role in the development of young children’s oral-language skills? The simple explanation is because the home’s language environment is relatively constant and provides important opportunities for language interactions between children and adults. While preschools and elementary schools contribute to children’s language development, opportunities for home-like interactions are rare, due to the size of classes and the length of time spent in class....Only 20 percent or less of the time children talked with adults in preschool was spent in conversations that went beyond the here and now. The rest of the time teachers were giving directions or asking children for specific information, such as the names of colors or letters.

—Leon Lynn

## THE SCHOOL LIBRARIAN'S ROLE IN PROMOTING READING

Strategies to promote reading within the building, attract students to the library, and help students appreciate the library through the initiative of the library staff:

- Book of the day—Each day school announcements will ‘advertise’ a book. The announcement reader can summarize the description on the book jacket to interest students in the book. The library staff will display the book in the library for a day and then check it out.
- Extended library hours —8 a.m. to 4 p.m. with students using the library before school with a pass.
- Racks of paperback books—Create high interest, attractive, and easy-access book displays for students.
- Spontaneous rewarding of students for carrying a leisure-reading book with them during the school day. The principal could ask to see students’ library books at any time and reward them with certificates or other incentives.
- Sponsor reading competitions such as Battle of the Books among homerooms or between schools.
- Conduct research scavenger hunts.
- Hold a luncheon for select students and give them the first opportunity to preview new books.
- Encourage teachers to hold events and activities in the library so that students come to view the library as an interesting and popular school destination.
- Sponsor a paperback book exchange.
- Create bibliographies for different interests and also for various problems students face.
- Promote the library and library activities in the school newspaper and parent newsletter.
- Award certificates or other incentives after a student reads and completes a librarian-created survey/questionnaire.
- Prepare a brochure or other handout for students and parents explaining library services and policies.
- Deliver book talks or talks on topics that students can later explore in specific books.
- Create a bulletin board or display case where students can post their reviews of favorite books they have read. Encourage them, also, to post their reviews on such websites as Amazon.

—Dan L. Miller

Many researchers consider diagnostic assessment the most important part of any literacy program. Whether the assessments are designed by a district's research department or bought from a publisher, they require investments of both time and money....Researchers say a district can make its biggest impact on student literacy simply by redirecting professional development money toward training teachers to use literacy-based strategies.

—Rebecca Jones

## **ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE LITERACY PROGRAMS**

Researchers identified 15 key elements of effective adolescent literacy programs:

### *Elements of Instruction*

1. Direct, explicit comprehension instruction
2. Effective instructional principles embedded in content
3. Motivation and self-directed learning
4. Text-based collaborative learning
5. Strategic tutoring
6. Diverse Texts
7. Intensive writing
8. A technology component
9. Ongoing formative assessment of students

### *Elements in the infrastructure*

10. Extended time for literacy
11. Professional development
12. Ongoing summative assessment of students and programs
13. Teacher teams
14. Leadership
15. A comprehensive and coordinated literacy program

—*Reading Next—A  
Vision of Action  
and Research in  
Middle  
and High School  
Literacy*

In the cosmic sense, the same trends that threaten newspapers threaten books. It isn't just a matter of 'business models' and the proliferation of alternative and cheap forms of amusement—computers, mobile, video games and everything on demand, all the time. There is an aversion to long chunks of sentences.

And there is a literary death spiral. The less we read books, the less we read journalism; the less we read journalism, the less we read books. Reading skills atrophy or, worse, were never properly acquired to their fullest.

The dire problem is that long chunks of sentences are still the best way humans have to express complex thoughts, intricate observations, fleeting emotions—the whole range of what we are. I have some confidence that newspaper (and broadcast) journalism can and will be successfully replaced on new platforms with different technologies and tools. I have no such confidence about replacing what lives in books.

—Dick Meyer

It is unclear whether the American attention span can support book reading for much longer. As children are reared on ‘Baby Einstein’ and then fertilized by an ever expanding diet of fast-paced electronic stimulation, as our communication gets sliced and diced into instant messages and abbreviated e-mails, it would be unrealistic to expect our synapses to stay the same. We will simply like books less than we did.

In capitalism, value is allocated in the form of money. That less money is being allocated to books and book publicity means that the society values books less. Books must be the most unprofitable form of entertainment and media today. You can probably count the number of authors and publishers who make, say, top lawyer money on your fingers and toes. Celebrity rarely comes to authors just from their books, but instead through movies and television.

This is a cruel virtue in most ways. It is partly because book writing is largely immune from the huge profiteering and wildly promiscuous marketing of, say, the shampoo or video game businesses that so many fabulous, contrarian, angry and wholly unique novels, biographies, histories and political books are written. Big money has homogenized movies and television, for example, and a ‘winner take all’ economy of culture distributes huge rewards to the most popular few, with less left for the oddballs and dissenters. That isn’t true of books yet, though fewer authors can make livings writing and reviewing books.

—Dick Meyer

Researchers recommend providing every student with two to four hours of literacy instruction every day. For most students, this means receiving literacy instruction and support throughout the day, not just in language arts but in every course from physical education to calculus.

Kids who are reading two or more grades below grade level also need at least 90 minutes of purposeful literacy intervention every day.

—Rebecca Jones



Now that summer vacation is coming, what do we do with our time? Summer is traditionally the time for young people to play, and play should certainly be a part of any vacation. But now that you as young people are becoming more mature and are being held accountable for increasingly more responsibilities, you should also be preparing yourself for the coming school year. If there is a summer job or odd jobs you can get to earn extra money, that will certainly be a productive way to spend the summer. In addition, you also should be continuing your academics throughout the summer. Make use of the library and the bookmobile to read as many novels as you can during the summer. Reading is a pleasurable way to pass the summer and at the same time you will be dramatically increasing your reading skills. Chose a few non-fiction books also that deal with areas in which you have an interest—space, science, exploring, computers, animals, biographies, for instance. It would also be helpful to buy or lend from a library a book on study skills. Something with a title like ‘How to do Better in School’ or ‘How to Improve Your Study Habits’ would be most beneficial.

Whatever you do this summer, try to help yourself get a head start on the next school year. Read up while you rest up!

—Dan L. Miller

Have students turn in brief notes on the day’s reading that they can use during exams. At the start of each class, a professor in the physical sciences asks students to submit a 3" x 5" card with an outline, definitions, key ideas, or other material from the day's assigned reading. After class, he checks the cards and stamps them with his name. He returns the cards to students at a class session prior to the midterm. Students can then add any material they would like to the cards but cannot submit additional cards. The cards are again returned to the faculty member who distributes them to students during the test. This faculty member reports that the number of students completing the reading jumped from 10 percent to 90 percent and that students especially valued these ‘survival cards.’

—J. W. Daniel

If your department budget or personal budget does not allow purchase of new books, find inexpensive way to stock books. Haunt garage sales, annual second-hand book and library sales, the Goodwill and Salvation Army book sections. Be bold enough to advertise in the school paper or local paper for unloved books. Approach local merchants for their help in a worthy book project, or ask the PTA to solicit stray books (no questions asked) from homes of students. Talk the librarian into giving you attractive dust jackets for the bulletin board or for your desk or the blackboard. Announce television, movie, or video events that are taken from books or lead into reading. Use display space for students’ responses to what they have read: drawings, paintings, collages, or personal writing in response to reading.

—Jane Christensen

Fewer than 50% of UK children aged eight to 17 read a novel outside class every month, research suggests.

The National Literacy Trust survey of about 18,000 school children suggests youngsters are more likely to read text messages and emails than fiction.

Most children (28.9%) estimated they had between 11 and 50 books in their homes. But one in six said they rarely read outside the classroom.

Text messages, magazines, e-mails and websites were the top leisure reading choices of young people. But Ebooks were read the least frequently.

The findings show that more girls admit they read text messages, magazines, e-mails, fiction, song lyrics and social networking message boards and poems than boys, while more boys said they read newspapers, comics and manuals.

The survey also raises concerns that some youngsters are not reading at all, which can hinder their achievement in the classroom.

One in six (16.4%) said they 'rarely' read outside class, while 7.3% admitted that they never read outside class.

—Hannah Richardson  
(2011)

Youngsters who do not read for pleasure will grow up to be the one in six adults who struggle with literacy. Getting these children reading and helping them to love reading is the way to turn their lives around and give them new opportunities and aspirations.

—Jonathan Douglas

Reading for pleasure is an extraordinary activity. The black squiggles on the white pages are still as the grave, colorless as the moonlit desert; but they give the skilled reader a pleasure as acute as the touch of a loved body, as rousing, colorful, transfiguring as anything out there in the real world.

And yet, the more stirring the book the quieter the reader; pleasure reading breeds a concentration so effortless that the absorbed reader of fiction (transported by the book to some other place and shielded by it from distractions), who is often reviled as an escapist and denounced as the victim of a vice as pernicious as tipping in the morning, should instead be the envy of every student and every teacher.

—Victor Nell

Make reading easy. If your TV is within easy reach, but books are stored on a high shelf, you can probably guess how your child will spend her free time. But if she has her own bookshelf filled with interesting books and TV time must be scheduled in advance, she'll probably pick up a book.

—*The Parent Institute*

Read aloud to your child. Research shows this is probably the most important thing you can do to encourage your child's reading success. Here are some tips from Jim Trelease's *The Read Aloud Handbook*, an excellent book to read before you begin:

- Begin to read to your child as soon as possible—no matter how young.
- Try to set aside time every day for reading aloud. You can start with just 10 minutes a day.
- Remember that the art of listening is an acquired one. It must be taught and cultivated gradually. Vary the length and subject matter of your reading.

And here some read-aloud don'ts, also from *The Read Aloud Handbook*:

- Don't read stories you don't enjoy yourself.
- Don't be surprised if your child interrupts with a lot of questions. Answer his questions right away.
- Don't confuse quantity with quality. Your child will remember 10 minutes of reading together far longer than he'll remember two hours of television.
- Don't compete with the television. Trelease says that if parents ask children if they prefer a story or TV, kids will usually choose television. But, he says, 'since you are the adult, you choose.' Tell your child the TV will be turned off at 8:30—regardless. If he wants a story, fine. If he doesn't, that's okay, too. But don't give your child the idea that books are the reason he can't watch TV.

—*The Parent Institute*

Do you remember how hard it was to put away a good book just because it was bedtime? Did you bring a flashlight to bed to try to sneak in a few extra pages before your parents caught you?

Why not relax your family's bedtime rules once a week? Let your child know he can stay up as late as he wants...as long as he is reading in bed. He'll probably fall asleep soon anyway.

Choose a weekend night when your child can sleep late the next morning. You might even want to plan a special bedtime snack. You'll encourage your child to read for pleasure...and help them find out that reading is fun.

—*The Parent Institute*

If you're searching for a way to get your children reading aloud with comprehension, expression, fluency, and joy, reader's theater is a miracle. Hand out a photocopied play script, assign a part to each child, and have them simply read the script aloud and act it out. That's it. And then magic happens.

—Judy Freeman

How can you tell whether a book is on your child's reading level? Some educators suggest using the 'rule of thumb.'

Have your child read a page of the book aloud. Have her hold up one finger for each word she does not know. If she holds up four fingers and a thumb before the end of the page, the book is probably too hard for her to read alone. But it might be a great book to read aloud

—*The Parent Institute*

Follow this six-step process for reading textbooks. In order, have your students:

1. Look at the pictures.
2. Read the captions.
3. Look at maps and charts.
4. Look for BIG IDEAS—words in bold, in color or in italics.
5. Skim the first and last paragraphs.
6. Then read the text.

Using this method, students will have a much better understanding of what they read.

—Gay Ivey and Douglas  
Fisher

Instead of rushing by works so fast that we don't even muss up our hair, we should tarry, attend to the sensuousness of reading, allow ourselves to enter the experience of words.

—Lindsay Waters

Reading usually precedes writing. And the impulse to write is almost always fired by reading. Reading, the love of reading, is what makes you dream of becoming a writer.

--Susan Sontag

Reader's theater allows children the luxury of lingering over a story; acting it out many times so they come to understand all of its nuances. Too often, children read a story and only understand it at its most superficial literal level. With reader's theater, they're not just reading a story; they're living it.

—Judy Freeman

Reader's theater is a wonderful technique for helping readers learn to read aloud with expression. I especially like to perform reader's theater without props so the readers learn that the expression in their voices needs to provide much of the drama of the story.

—Dr. Peggy Sharp

### **POINTERS FOR TEACHERS NEW TO READER'S THEATER:**

- Choose only scripts that are fun to do with lots of good dialogue. Boring scripts are no better than boring stories.
- Start slowly and spend the time necessary so students feel comfortable in the performance mode. Provide opportunities for students to practice. Students do not memorize their parts; they always read from their scripts.
- A stage is unnecessary. Students simply stand or sit in a semicircle. Model each character's part and match roles to readers.
- Combine parts if there are too many, and cut out scenes and characters that aren't important. Scripts are not sacrosanct. Change them if they work better another way.
- Work with small groups, not with the whole class, whenever possible.
- Provide instructional support for new vocabulary and for understanding the different characters.

—Susan Finney

Some people there are who, being grown, forget the horrible task of learning to read. It is perhaps the greatest single effort that the human undertakes, and he must do it as a child....I remember that words—written or printed—were devils, and books, because they gave me pain, were my enemies.

—John Steinbeck

When England was experiencing its darkest days during World War II, Winston Churchill went home at night and read Jane Austen.

—Peggy Sullivan

Reading should give pleasure; that somewhere along the line, the same children who have to be taught to attack words should have an opportunity to learn to love the words they are attacking.

—Peggy Sullivan

## **SOME NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE THOUGHTS ON READING IN SCHOOL**

Having a reading program based on just diagnosis and prescription is like making a cake and not tasting it—

Like notes of music on paper—

The library with closed doors—

Like a marriage by contract.

Reading without sharing is like watching a circus without saying anything—

Like a commercial without a TV program—

Like a frame without a picture—

Like describing a spiral staircase without using your hands.

Explaining the rule for determining whether g is 'hard' or 'soft' is like outlining how to play jazz—

Like instructing how to kiss—

Like using a compass without a map—

Like explaining the bad joke.

Measuring .3 three year's in reading is

Like measuring a sunrise—

Like measuring a laugh—

Like measuring an idea —

Like weighing happiness.

Reading is not a Forty-five Minute Period Of Instruction with Behavioral Objectives and Predictable Outcomes.

Reading is enjoying, learning, feeling, becoming,  
sensing, laughing, crying, hating,  
deciding, loving, growing, sympathizing,  
listening.

Reading is All Day—  
Being and Becoming  
Growing and Growing.

—Nancy Whitelaw

USSR is an acronym for *Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading*. During USSR everyone in the room reads silently, without interruption, for a given length of time. A kitchen timer is usually used to start and at the end of the bell, end the USSR period. The time interval is announced, the timer set, and everyone reads until the timer rings. No one is to interrupt. No getting up to exchange books. No asking someone else what a word is. No interruptions, no matter how socially acceptable the excuse may be. If anyone interrupts—the USSR period is ended for everyone! The teacher reads. No correcting papers, bringing the register up to date, etc. If reading is really important enough to do, even for a busy teacher, then students may think it is important enough for them to do....Start the USSR program with a 10 minute period. Add 5 minutes every two or three USSR periods until you reach the level desired. Primary grades can usually work up to 15 or 20 minutes a day within a couple of weeks. Intermediate grades can usually get up to 30-40 minutes. Jr. and Sr. high school classes can usually work up to 45-50 minutes.

— Frank Greene

There is an...annoying category of adults who do some disservice to the idea of reading and the part it plays in successful living. They are those who have mastered the skill and who may, in fact, do some secret reading for pleasure. But they are reluctant to admit that their busy, successful lives allow them time for reading as a pleasure in itself. You see them on planes, reading workbooks and reports and proposals, turning rapidly past all the interesting parts of newspapers to focus on the business news. One of them, a college president, spoke once to a group of librarians and began his talk by saying that he felt a little awkward being among librarians, since the only things he had time to read were the photocopied materials that came across his desk. He even seemed to be proud of that statement, and there was a ripple of chuckles across the audience, acknowledging that many among them had that same feeling of being overwhelmed by the necessary reading their jobs required.

—Peggy Sullivan

There are families that do not have the time or the know-how to integrate reading into their common lives. We can attribute these lacks to insufficient time or to the prevalence of other media, notably television, but here is more to it than that. The child who saw his mother seated with a book in her hand for the first time and who told a neighbor that she was inside ‘watching a book’ tells a good deal about television and that family’s use of time, but, as an enthusiastic television and movie fan myself, I think we create paper tigers about the encroachment of these other media. The greater issue is discipline. We are fond of quoting the biblical statement about having times to live, to die, to sow, to reap. Successful families set times to read, to share, to view, to talk.

—Peggy Sullivan

Parents need to allow some privacy on the part of their children when it comes to their choices for reading. Not every book will move their intelligence quotients up a notch, and some may even seem to retard their social progress. I am thinking here of the riddle and joke books which are a temporary cult among almost all young readers, and which must be shared to be thoroughly enjoyed. But the child needs the freedom to read some books and not have to comment on them, perhaps not even to admit that he has them at home.

—Peggy Sullivan

[Citing the *National Endowment for the Arts Reading at Risk: A Survey of Literary Reading in America*] For all the splash of Amazon.com and the ubiquity of huge chain bookstores, are people in the United States reading more than they used to? A recent report...on literary reading in the United States answers with a gloomy no....According to the literary segment of the survey, literary reading in they United States is declining at a clip. The report’s definition of ‘literary reading’ encompasses any novel, short story, play, or collection of poetry, regardless of its literary quality. ...The rate of decline in literary reading is accelerating....Adult literary reading is declining in all age groups, especially in the youngest age groups. In 1982, adults ages 18-34 were the most likely group to read literature. In 2002, this group was the least likely to read literature....If the decline in reading continues at this rate, ‘literary reading as a leisure activity will virtually disappear in half a century.’

—Amy M. Azzam

Reading is first and foremost a form of communication. When learning to talk, children develop the concept that words communicate thoughts, emotions, and needs. When learning to read, they develop the concept that words can communicate visually as well as orally. In order that the printed words will have meaning for them, children must have a solid foundation in language. Mastering spoken language is a key step toward mastering written language. The more experiences children have, the more they are talked to and listened to, the more stimulation they receive—the



more they will be ready to read. Parents can help their children develop the needed foundation in language by talking with them and listening to them.

- Talk with your child while doing things together: folding laundry, driving the car, cooking.
- Ask your child to sequence the events of the day at dinner or at bedtime.
- Discuss what you've seen on TV or read together. Ask questions: who was your favorite character? Why? What would you have done? What do you think will happen next?
- Repeat favorite nursery rhymes and stories. If your child has memorized them, listen while the child tells them to you.
- Encourage questions and try to answer them.

—Madelyn Stoner

A book is only one-half of an equation; the other half is the individual who misreading it.

—Dale Warren

A 2007 study by the *National Endowment for the Arts* showed that the number of young people who read daily for pleasure has dropped dramatically in recent decades, and the decline correlates to a drop in students' test scores.

Among the findings is that, although test scores among elementary students have been rising, they are flat for middle school students and decline by the time children reach their senior year of high school. The data also showed that those who reported reading for fun almost every day scored better on tests than those who said they read never or hardly at all.

—Michelle Sherman

## **READING STRONG ALL SUMMER LONG**

Ways to keep learning alive throughout the summer months can be as simple as:

- Visiting the library on a regular basis to pick out books you want read. You may want to combine your trip to the library with a bike ride—a great way to exercise the mind and body!
- Set a summer goal for a specific number of books you plan to read—and do it!
- Check out the book table at neighborhood garage sales this summer. You never know what you may come across.
- What about reading with a buddy? Think of someone with whom you could share reading time and books with this summer.

## FOR PARENTS:

- Create cozy spots for reading. Look around the house for nooks or corners that would make good reading spots; a playhouse outside or even a tent.
- Give your child a few dollars for a ‘shopping spree’ at the local bookstore.
- Planning a vacation? Write, call or research online information about your destination for your kids to read in advance or your trip.
- Start subscriptions to children’s magazines....
- Make it a habit to read with and to your children every day.

—Sandy Mather

Read aloud with a child for twenty minutes a day. Research tells us that 75% of a child’s brain is formed in the first 12 months of life. Research also tells us that if you read aloud to a child, for only 20 minutes a day, starting from birth, that child will start school ready to read. Most middle school children start preschool knowing their alphabet and their numbers because someone took the time to read more than 1,000 stories aloud to them between the ages of 0 and 5. Most poor children start kindergarten or first grade not knowing the alphabet or their numbers and having had very few books read aloud to them. They are not ready to read in kindergarten or first grade, and even with the efforts of extraordinary teachers, they may never catch up.

—Sandy Mather

Learning to read is much like learning any other skill. It requires a combination of instruction, experimentation, and practice. But the first step must be motivation. The child must want to learn to read. Parents can encourage their children to read by demonstrating that they think reading is important. Parents can help their children discover the benefits of reading: new ideas...relaxation...adventure...fun.

- Buy as many children’s books as you can afford.
- Give books as gifts.
- Visit the library regularly.
- Allow your children to choose their own books. Don’t rush them.
- Show your children that you enjoy reading. Make sure they see you reading newspapers, magazines, and books.
- Set up a special place for reading.
- Encourage older children to read to younger children.
- Surround your children with words; point on street signs; label objects in the house such as table, desk, and stove.
- Play word games like Scrabble, Anagrams, and Ad Lib.
- Watch educational TV programs together. Some stress reading development (Sesame Street).

- Read to your child, especially at bedtime. Reread favorite stories.
- Ask your child to read to you.
- Stress the things your children do well in reading rather than any mistakes they make. Remember: success breeds success.

—Madelyn Stoner

If this nation is to be wise as well as strong, if we are to achieve our destiny, then we need more new ideas for more wise men reading more good books in more public libraries. These libraries should be open to all except the censor. We must know all the facts and hear all the alternatives and listen to all the criticisms. Let us welcome controversial books and controversial authors. For the *Bill of Rights* is the guardian of our security as well as our liberty.

—John Fitzgerald  
Kennedy

One of my less pleasant chores when I was young was to read the *Bible* from one end to the other. Reading the *Bible* straight through is at least 70 percent discipline, like learning Latin. But the good parts are, of course, simply amazing. God is an extremely uneven writer, but when He's good, nobody can touch Him.

--John W. Gardner

There is then creative reading as well as creative writing. When the mind is braced by labor and invention, the page of whatever book we read becomes luminous with manifold allusion. Every sentence is doubly significant, and the sense of our author is as broad as the world.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

Few are sufficiently sensible of the importance of that economy in reading which selects, almost exclusively, the very first order of books. Why, except for some special reason, read an inferior book, at the very time you might be reading one of the highest order?

--John W. Foster

What we call education and culture is for the most part nothing but the substitution of reading for experience, of literature for life, of the obsolete fictitious for the contemporary real.

--George Bernard Shaw

The test of literature is, I suppose, whether we ourselves live more intensely for the reading of it.

--Elizabeth Drew

I have not placed reading before praying because I regard it more important, but because, in order to pray aright, we must understand what we are praying for.

--Angelina Grimke

The reading public is intellectually adolescent at best, and it is obvious that what is called significant literature will only be sold to this public by exactly the same methods as are used to sell it toothpaste, cathartics and automobiles.

--Raymond Chandler

Of all the diversions of life, there is none so proper to fill up its empty spaces as the reading of useful and entertaining authors.

--Joseph Addison

You think your pain and your heartbreak are unprecedented in the history of the world, but then you read. It was books that taught me that the things that tormented me most were the very things that connected me with all the people who were alive, who had ever been alive.

--James Baldwin

Reading one book is like eating one potato chip.

--Diane Duane

Reading is escape, and the opposite of escape; it's a way to make contact with reality after a day of making things up, and it's a way of making contact with someone else's imagination after a day that's all too real.

--Nora Ephron

I cannot remember the books I've read any more than the meals I have eaten; even so, they have made me.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

If you would tell me the heart of a man, tell me not what he reads, but what he rereads.

--François Mauriac

Reading brings us unknown friends.

--Honoré de Balzac

Reading is the sole means by which we slip, involuntarily, often helplessly, into another's skin, another's voice, another's soul.

--Joyce Carol Oates

We ought to read only the kind of books that wound and stab us... We need the books that effect us like a disaster, that grieve us deeply, like the death of someone we loved more than ourselves, like being banished into forests far from everyone, like a suicide. A book must be the axe for the frozen sea inside us.

--Franz Kafka

We read books to find out who we are. What other people, real or imaginary, do and think and feel... is an essential guide to our understanding of what we ourselves are and may become.

--Ursula K. Le Guin

Read not to contradict and confute; nor to believe and take for granted; nor to find talk and discourse; but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested: that is, some books are to be read only in parts, others to be read, but not curiously, and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention.

--Francis Bacon

Reading a book is like re-writing it for yourself. You bring to a novel, anything you read, all your experience of the world. You bring your history and you read it in your own terms.

--Angela Carter

I can feel infinitely alive curled up on the sofa reading a book.

--Benedict Cumberbatch

Reading quickens the growth of a heart like nothing else.

--Catherynne M. Valente

Most of what makes a book 'good' is that we are reading it at the right moment for us.

--Alain de Botton

You should never read just for 'enjoyment.' Read to make yourself smarter! Less judgmental. More apt to understand your friends' insane behavior, or better yet, your own. Pick 'hard books.' Ones you have to concentrate on while reading. And for god's sake, don't let me ever hear you say, 'I can't read fiction. I only have time for the truth.' Fiction is the truth, fool! Ever hear of 'literature'? That means fiction, too, stupid.

--John Waters

Why do I read?  
I just can't help myself.  
I read to learn and to grow, to laugh  
and to be motivated.  
I read to understand things I've never  
been exposed to.  
I read when I'm crabby, when I've just  
said monumentally dumb things to the  
people I love.  
I read for strength to help me when I  
feel broken, discouraged, and afraid.  
I read when I'm angry at the whole  
world.  
I read when everything is going right.  
I read to find hope.  
I read because I'm made up not just of  
skin and bones, of sights, feelings,  
and a deep need for chocolate, but I'm  
also made up of words.  
Words describe my thoughts and what's  
hidden in my heart.  
Words are alive—when I've found a  
story that I love, I read it again and  
again, like playing a favorite song  
over and over.  
Reading isn't passive—I enter the  
story with the characters, breathe  
their air, feel their frustrations,  
scream at them to stop when they're  
about to do something stupid, cry with  
them, laugh with them.  
Reading for me, is spending time with a  
friend.  
A book is a friend.  
You can never have too many.

--Gary Paulsen

Reading good books ruins you for enjoying bad books.

--Mary Ann Shaffer

Because we are readers, we don't have to wait for some communications executive to decide what we should think about next—and how we should think about it. We can fill our heads with anything from aardvarks to zucchinis—at any time of night or day.

--Kurt Vonnegut

That's what I love about reading: one tiny thing will interest you in a book, and that tiny thing will lead you to another book, and another bit there will lead you onto a third book. It's geometrically progressive—all with no end in sight, and for no other reason than sheer enjoyment.

--Mary Ann Shaffer

Show me a family of readers, and I will show you the people who move the world.

--Napoléon Bonaparte

My personal hobbies are reading, listening to music, and silence.

--Edith Sitwell

Let others pride themselves about how many pages they have written; I'd rather boast about the ones I've read.

--Jorge Luis Borges

Despite the enormous quantity of books, how few people read! And if one reads profitably, one would realize how much stupid stuff the vulgar herd is content to swallow every day.

--Voltaire

Reading is everything. Reading makes me feel like I've accomplished something, learned something, become a better person. Reading makes me smarter. Reading gives me something to talk about later on. Reading is the unbelievably healthy way my attention deficit disorder medicates itself. Reading is escape, and the opposite of escape; it's a way to make contact with reality after a day of making things up, and it's a way of making contact with someone else's imagination after a day that's all too real. Reading is grist. Reading is bliss.

--Nora Ephron

There's nothing wrong with reading a book you love over and over. When you do, the words get inside you, become a part of you, in a way that words in a book you've read only once can't.

--Gail Carson Levine

When the Day of Judgment dawns and people, great and small, come marching in to receive their heavenly rewards, the Almighty will gaze upon the mere bookworms and say to Peter, 'Look, these need no reward. We have nothing to give them. They have loved reading.'

--Virginia Woolf

All morning I struggled with the sensation of stray wisps of one world seeping through the cracks of another. Do you know the feeling when you start reading a new book before the membrane of the last one has had time to close behind you? You leave the previous book with ideas and themes—characters even—caught in the fibers of your clothes, and when you open the new book, they are still with you.

--Diane Setterfield

Cram your head with characters and stories. Abuse your library privileges. Never stop looking at the world, and never stop reading to find out what sense other people have made of it. If people give you a hard time and tell you to get your nose out of a book, tell them you're working. Tell them it's research. Tell them to pipe down and leave you alone.

--Jennifer Weiner

When we read, another person thinks for us: we merely repeat his mental process. In learning to write, the pupil goes over with his pen what the teacher has outlined in pencil: so in reading; the greater part of the work of thought is already done for us. This is why it relieves us to take up a book after being occupied with our own thoughts. And in reading, the mind is, in fact, only the playground of another's thoughts. So it comes about that if anyone spends almost the whole day in reading, and by way of relaxation devotes the intervals to some thoughtless pastime, he gradually loses the capacity for thinking; just as the man who always rides, at last forgets how to walk. This is the case with many learned persons: they have read themselves stupid.

--Arthur Schopenhauer

The act of reading imbues the reader with a sensitivity toward the outside world that people who don't read can sometimes lack. I know it seems like a contradiction in terms; after all reading is such a solitary, internalizing act that it appears to represent a disengagement from day-to-day life. But reading, and particularly the reading of fiction, encourages us to view the world in new and challenging ways...It allows us to inhabit the consciousness of another which is a precursor to empathy, and empathy is, for me, one of the marks of a decent human being.

--John Connolly



Read a thousand books, and your words will flow like a river.

--Lisa See

Employ your time in improving yourself by other men's writings so that you shall come easily by what others have labored hard for.

—Socrates

Once upon a time in the dead of winter in the Dakota Territory, Theodore Roosevelt took off in a makeshift boat down the Little Missouri River in pursuit of a couple of thieves who had stolen his prized rowboat. After several days on the river, he caught up and got the draw on them with his trusty Winchester, at which point they surrendered. Then Roosevelt set off in a borrowed wagon to haul the thieves cross-country to justice. They headed across the snow-covered wastes of the Badlands to the railhead at Dickinson, and Roosevelt walked the whole way, the entire 40 miles. It was an astonishing feat, what might be called a defining moment in Roosevelt's eventful life. But what makes it especially memorable is that during that time, he managed to read all of *Anna Karenina*. I often think of that when I hear people say they haven't time to read.

--David McCullough

Maxims and aphorisms—let us remember that wisdom is the true salt of literature, and the books that are most nourishing are richly stored with it, and that is the main object to seek in reading books.

--John Morley

People who say they don't have time to read simply don't want to.

--Julie Rugg

Adolescents entering the adult world in the 21st century will read and write more than at any other time in human history. They will need advanced levels of literacy to perform their jobs, run their households, act as citizens, and conduct their personal lives. They will need literacy to cope with the flood of information they will find everywhere they turn. They will need literacy to feed their imaginations so they can create the world of the future. In a complex and sometimes even dangerous world, their ability to read will be crucial. Continual instruction beyond the early grades is needed.

—*International Reading Association*

## **BARRIERS TO ADOLESCENT READING SUCCESS**

### *Characteristics of Poor Readers*

- = Limited oral language proficiency
- = Poor decoding skills (i.e., how to decipher a written word based on knowledge that letters represent sounds)
- = Poor fluency (i.e., the ability to read quickly, accurately, and with appropriate expression)
- = Limited vocabulary
- = Limited background knowledge
- = Limited content-area knowledge
- = Poor comprehension strategy knowledge and use

### *Some Causes of Reading Problems in kindergarten through grade 3*

- = Poor decoding instruction
- = Inadequate opportunities to develop vocabulary, background, and content knowledge
- = Lack of pleasurable and meaningful reading and writing experiences
- = Lack of access to comprehension instruction
- = Little access to informational texts

### *Some Causes of Reading Problems in grades 4 through 12*

- = Decreased motivation to read
- = Inadequate opportunities to develop vocabulary, background, and content knowledge
- = Lack of access to comprehension instruction
- = Increasing reading and writing demands across the curriculum
- = Reading and writing instruction disconnected from content-area literacy demands
- = Reading and writing instruction not seen as province of middle and high school instruction
- = Lack of widespread support for adolescent literacy

—Ilene Berman and Gina  
Biancarosa

## **ELEMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH IMPROVING ADOLESCENT LITERACY BASED ON THE MOST CURRENT RESEARCH**

A comprehensive literacy program targeted to older readers would include many of the following elements:

1. **Direct, explicit comprehension instruction:** Instruction makes reading comprehension strategies explicit to students through modeling and explanation and gives students ample opportunities for practice.
2. **Effective instructional principles embedded in content:** Instruction is embedded and reinforced across content areas, with attention paid to content-specific texts and tasks.
3. **Motivation and self-directed learning:** Instruction promotes engagement and self-regulated learning for the development of motivated and flexible literacy skills.
4. **Text-based collaborative learning:** Instruction enables students to engage in guided interactions with texts in groups in order to foster learning of new knowledge.
5. **Strategic tutoring:** Individualized instruction is more intense for struggling readers and focuses on instilling independence.
6. **Diverse texts:** Students have access to, and experience with, texts at a variety of difficulty levels that vary in the styles, genres, topics, and content areas they cover.
7. **Intensive writing:** Instruction should integrate writing as a vehicle for learning and as a measure of comprehension and learning across content areas.
8. **A technology component:** Technology is used to leverage instructional time to provide additional support and practice for students as well as prepare students for the ways different technology alters the reading and writing experience.
9. **Ongoing formative assessment of students:** Instruction should be determined by the use of ongoing assessment of students that helps teachers target instruction.
10. **Extended time for literacy:** Reading and writing instruction takes place for longer than a single language arts period and is extended through integration and emphasis across curricula. Extended time may also include additional time devoted to literacy instruction, especially for learners more than two grade levels behind.
11. **Professional development:** Teachers participate in professional development experiences that are systematic, frequent, long-term, and ongoing to improve their ability to teach reading and writing across the curriculum.
12. **Ongoing summative assessment of students and programs:** Student progress is monitored and tracked over the long term.

13. Teacher teams: Infrastructure supports teachers working in small, interdisciplinary teams to allow for collaboration and more consistent and coordinated instruction and professional development.
14. Leadership: Principals and administrators participate in professional development and foster teachers taking leadership roles.
15. A comprehensive and coordinated literacy program: Instruction encompasses all aspects of literacy in ways that allow all facets of the program to complement one another and is consistent with professional development as well as the chosen materials and approaches for learning.

—*Alliance for Excellent  
Education's  
Reading Next: A  
Vision for Action  
and Research in  
Middle and High  
School Literacy* by  
*the Carnegie  
Corporation*

A new study through the University of Virginia has determined that kindergarten is the new first grade! The study, by Bassok and Rorem, from the University of Virginia's *Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service*, 'used two large nationally representative datasets to track changes in kindergarten classrooms between 1998 and 2006.' They found 'that in 1998, 31 percent of kindergarten teachers indicated that most children should learn to read while in kindergarten. By 2006, 65 percent of teachers agreed with this statement.'

—Nancy Bailey

The critical factor as to how a student will learn to read is not how aggressively the child is given instruction but rather their own enthusiasm for learning. Many early learning programs interfere with the child's natural enthusiasm by imposing on children to concentrate on tasks when they aren't ready.

—*The American  
Academy of  
Pediatrics*

According to the first study of its kind released in the United States, kids are reading an average of about 26 books per school year. That's the great news. The less than great news is that their volume of reading peaks in second grade, and the level and volume of books that they're reading stagnates from about sixth grade onward, even dropping off in high school.

—Dave Nagel

## WHAT JOHNNY WON'T READ

Shakespeare or Waiting for Godot,  
War and Peace. Daniel Defoe  
An Introduction to Abnormal Psychology 101  
The instructions on shampoo  
There terms and conditions of his MasterCard  
Movie subtitles, Chinese menus,  
Letters to the Editor, the calendar

Passport guidelines, Christmas cards  
Internet text longer than his fingers  
Parking passes, blueprints  
Excerpts from the 9/11 Commission  
Jehovah's Witness pamphlets, side effects stickers  
Why Johnny Can't Read  
Articles in Playboy

The Charter of Rights and Freedoms  
Divorce papers and minds  
His father's suicide note  
STOP signs  
This

—Priscila Uppal

There is a mistaken idea of what young children should be able to do—what is age-appropriate. Here's a list of what 'typical' children know upon entering kindergarten, from the *National Center for Education Statistics* report *Entering Kindergarten: Findings from the Condition of Education 2000*:

Sixty-six percent of children entering kindergarten recognize letters in the alphabet.

Sixty-one percent of children entering kindergarten know you read left to right. Many kindergartners do not yet possess early reading skills.

Children might not point to letters representing sounds.

New kindergartners might not be able to read basic words by sight yet. Only 1 in 50 actually read basic and complex words entering kindergarten. Note this is what occurs but isn't what young children should necessarily be doing when it comes to reading.

Don't believe me? Pick up any book about normal reading development and you will find that young children progress when they are ready—at their own pace.

—Nancy Bailey

When kindergarten teachers expect every kindergartner to focus on reading and learn it at that age, it opens the door for all kinds of problems. Here are a few: **No Joy in Reading.** Children learn to hate reading. When you assess children too early, currently done in kindergarten with Response to Intervention testing like DIBELS, children learn reading is a chore. It becomes something serious—even fearful for a young child.

**Vocabulary Emphasis.** Most memorization is boring. When teachers focus on vocabulary acquisition and word recognition, young children lose interest in the stories. Curiosity is squelched. Some sight word instruction is fine, of course, but focusing so much and tracking every word as a data point is obsessive.

**Self-Fulfilling Prophecy.** If a kindergartner is not reading yet (normal), but they are treated like they have a problem, they really could develop a problem.

**Loss of Cognitive Ability/Play.** Heavily focusing on reading, at the expense of other important kindergarten tasks, like play, destroys critical aspects of learning. Without play, children lose the ability to think about things on their own. How does this toy work? How do I put the blocks together to build a house? What can I create on my own?

**Loss of Self-Worth.** It is fine for some children to show up reading in kindergarten, but children who are not reading yet (perfectly normal) may lose the feeling of self-worth. They could also act out becoming a behavior problem. Adults, after all, never trusted them to learn some things on their own.

**Reading Ability Isn't Everything.** Kindergarten students who already read fluently might have other problems that are overlooked by the teacher. Or they become bored because they are given nothing new to learn.

**A Lack of Socialization.** We know through research, like the study notes above, that socialization at this period of development is important, but with the total emphasis on learning to read at such a young age, socialization skills, including play, are pushed aside. Students miss out on developing relationships with other children. How will they get along later interacting with others as adults?

**Too Competitive.** Children are taught at an early age that they must compete and win in order to receive approval. They don't learn to care about others. They know some students read better or worse than they do. The emphasis is on reading not on the students and who they are.

**Disadvantaged Children.** While some students from poor backgrounds may not have been exposed to books and a good reading environment early on, pushing them to read through assessment and drill could squelch their interest in reading forever.

**Research.** Pushing children to read too soon defies past research by many recognized and well-regarded developmental psychologists and educators whose studies have stood the test of time.

While kindergarten is now the new 1st grade, in 10 more years will kindergarten be the next 2nd or 3rd grade? When will the current reformers be satisfied? When will they quit demeaning children and making them jump through inappropriate developmental hoops?

Enough is enough! Let children be children. Let them be their age. Bring back the joy of learning to read.

—Nancy Bailey

Less than half the adult population reads fiction, poetry or plays. Moreover, the pace of decline is accelerating, especially among 18- to 24-year-olds. Twenty years ago, this group was the most likely to pick up a book, and now they're the least—with the exception of those 65 and older, some of whom presumably find reading unrewarding for ophthalmological reasons rather than cultural ones.

—*The National*

*Endowment for the  
Arts (2004)*

- The quality of teaching accounts for five times as much variation in end-of-the-year reading achievement as the commercial reading program used by a district.
- The most valuable resource in the classroom is the time and attention of the teacher and, when available, the teacher aide; teachers should receive guidance in the effective use of teacher aides in the instruction of reading.
- The most effective use of a reading specialist is not in providing remedial instruction to students; rather, it is to work with classroom teachers to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and quality of instruction for all children. The finest programs in the country provide instructional

coordinators to serve as ‘mirrors’ and to give feedback and assistance to the regular classroom teachers.

- Reading is, by its nature, a smooth, integrated, and holistic act. Students should spend less time on workbooks and worksheets and more time on reading lengthy selections and discussing the important ideas contained in them.
- There is a close relationship between the language arts (reading, speaking, listening, and writing) and it is important, particularly in the early grades, not to devote all the students’ time and attention to drill and practice in beginning reading. Oral language activities, when students have an opportunity to express themselves, provide a foundation for reading and for general intellectual development. These experiences and expressive and expository writing opportunities should begin in the early grades.

—Dr. Richard C.  
Anderson

As Americans, especially younger Americans, read less, they read less well. Because they read less well, they have lower levels of academic achievement. (The shameful fact that nearly one-third of American teenagers drop out of school is deeply connected to declining literacy and reading comprehension.) With lower levels of reading and writing ability, people do less well in the job market. Poor reading skills correlate heavily with lack of employment, lower wages, and fewer opportunities for advancement. Significantly worse reading skills are found among prisoners than in the general adult population. And deficient readers are less likely to become active in civic and cultural life, most notably in volunteerism and voting....Reading transforms the lives of individuals—whatever their social circumstances. Regular reading not only boosts the likelihood of an individual’s academic and economic success—facts that are not especially surprising—but it also seems to awaken a person’s social and civic sense. Reading correlates with almost every measurement of positive personal and social behavior surveyed. It is reassuring, though hardly amazing, that readers attend more concerts and theater than non-readers, but it is surprising that they exercise more and play more sports—no matter what their educational level. The cold statistics confirm something that most readers know but have mostly been reluctant to declare as fact—books change lives for the better.

—Dana Gioia

- Nearly half of all Americans ages 18 to 24 read no books for pleasure.
- Less than one-third of 13-year-olds are daily readers.
- The percentage of 17-year-olds who read nothing at all for pleasure has doubled over a 20-year period. Yet the amount they read for school or homework (15 or fewer pages daily for 62% of students) has stayed the same.



- Voluntary reading rates diminish from childhood to late adolescence.
- Although reading tracks closely with education level, the percentage of college graduates who read literature has declined.
- 65% of college freshmen read for pleasure for less than an hour per week or not at all.
- By the time they become college seniors, one in three students read nothing at all for pleasure in a given week.
- Americans between 15 and 34 years of age devote less leisure time than older age groups to reading anything at all.
- 15- to 24-year-olds spend only 7–10 minutes per day on voluntary reading—about 60% less time than the average American.
- By contrast, 15- to 24-year-olds spend 2 to 2½ hours per day watching TV. This activity consumes the most leisure time for men and women of all ages.
- 58% of middle and high school students use other media while reading.
- Students report using media during 35% of their weekly reading time.
- 20% of their reading time is shared by TV-watching, video/computer game-playing, instant messaging, e-mailing or Web surfing.
- The number of books in a home is a significant predictor of academic achievement.
- Little more than one-third of high school seniors now read proficiently.
- Voluntary readers are better readers and writers than non-readers.
- Children and teenagers who read for pleasure on a daily or weekly basis score better on reading tests than infrequent readers.
- Frequent readers also score better on writing tests than non-readers or infrequent readers.

—Sunil Iyengar  
 Director, Research  
 & Analysis  
*National  
 Endowment for the  
 Arts*

My life is a reading list.

--John Irving

I have good reason to be content,  
 for thank God I can read and  
 perhaps understand Shakespeare to his depths.

--John Keats

We are now a culture whose information, ideas and epistemology are given form by television, not by the printed word. To be sure, there are still readers and there are many books published, but the uses of print and reading are not the same as they once were; not even in schools, the last institutions where print was thought to be invincible. They delude themselves who believe that television and print coexist, for coexistence implies parity. There is no parity here. Print is now merely a residual epistemology, and it will remain so, aided to some extent by the computer, and newspapers and magazines that are made to look like television screens. Like the fish who survive a toxic river and the boatmen who sail on it, there still dwell among us those whose sense of things is largely influenced by older and clearer waters.

—Neil Postman

Everywhere I have sought peace and not found it, except in a corner with a book.

--Thomas à Kempis

Oh, magic hour, when a child first knows she can read printed words.

--Betty Smith

I am a hedonistic reader; I have never read a book merely because it was ancient. I read books for the aesthetic emotions they offer me, and I ignore the commentaries and criticism.

--Jorge Luis Borges

Reading has cognitive consequences that extend beyond its immediate task of lifting meaning from a particular passage. Furthermore, these consequences are reciprocal and exponential in nature. Accumulated over time—spiraling either upward or downward—they carry profound implications for the development of a wide range of cognitive capabilities....regardless of reading ability, children who start reading for pleasure at an early age are exposed to exponentially higher numbers of new words—and a greater opportunity to develop literacy skills—than children denied early reading experiences. Because these skills are associated not just with reading comprehension, but also with greater cognitive development...we believe that independent reading may help explain the widening achievement disparities between the educational haves and have-nots.

—Anne Cunningham  
and Keith  
Stanovich

Voluntary reading involves personal choice, reading widely from a variety of sources, and choosing what one reads. Aliterates, people who have the ability to read but choose not to, miss just as much as those who cannot read at all.

Individuals read to live life to its fullest, to earn a living, to understand what is going on in the world, and to benefit from the accumulated knowledge of civilization. Even the benefits of democracy, and the capacity to govern ourselves successfully, depend on reading.

—*U.S. Department of  
Education*

Although [state] high school standards and courses tend to emphasize literature, most of the reading students will encounter in college or on the job is informational in nature (e.g., textbooks, manuals, articles, briefs and essays)....Most of the writing students will do in college and work is to inform and persuade, often requiring students to use evidence to support a position. Research also is cited as an important skill for college and work. State standards tend to give these types of writing short shrift, emphasizing narrative writing instead.

—*Achieve, Inc.*

Literary experience heals the wound, without undermining the privilege, of individuality. There are mass emotions which heal the wound; but they destroy the privilege....But in reading great literature I become a thousand men and yet remain myself....Here, as in worship, in love, in moral action, and in knowing, I transcend myself; and am never more myself than when I do.

—C. S. Lewis

I have sometimes dreamt, at least, that when the Day of Judgment dawns and the great conquerors and lawyers and statesmen come to receive their rewards—their crowns, their laurels, their names carved indelibly upon imperishable marble—the Almighty will turn to Peter and will say, not without a certain envy when he sees us coming with our books under our arms, ‘Look, these need no reward. We have nothing to give them here. They have loved reading.’

—*Virginia Woolf*

Graphic novels can dramatically help improve reading development for students struggling with language acquisition, including special-needs students, as the illustrations provide contextual clues to the meaning of the written narrative. They can provide autistic students with clues to emotional context that they might miss when reading traditional text. English-language learners will be more motivated by graphic novels, and will more readily acquire new vocabulary and increase English proficiency.

—*scholastic.com*

Adult literacy is a core social issue that if we could fix as a nation, we would make inroads into fixing many other social problems. Low literacy levels are correlated with higher rates of crime, problems with navigating the healthcare system, problems with financial literacy. We know that some of the folks who signed subprime mortgages didn't understand what they were signing.

—David Harvey

I began reading books, reading books to delirium. I began by vanishing from the known world into the passive abyss of reading but soon found myself engaged with surprising vigor because of the things in the books, or even the things surrounding the books, roused me from my stupor. From the nearest library I learned every sort of surprising thing—some of it, though not much of it, from books themselves.

—Annie Dillard

When you open a book, anything can happen. A book of fiction was a bomb. It was a land mine you wanted to go off. You wanted it to blow your whole day. Unfortunately, hundreds of thousands of books were duds. They have been rusting out of everyone's way for so long that they no longer worked. There was no way to distinguish the duds from the live mines except to throw yourself at them headlong, one by one.

—Annie Dillard

It was clear that adults, including our parents, approved of children who read books, but it was not at all clear why this was so. Our reading was subversive, and we knew it. Did they think we read to improve our vocabularies? Did they want us to read and not pay at the least bit of heed to what we read, as they wanted us to go to Sunday school and ignore what we heard?

I was now believing books more than I believed what I saw and heard. I was reading books about the actual, historical, moral world—in which somehow I felt I was not living.

—Annie Dillard

What I sought in books was imagination. It was depth, depth of thought and feeling; some sort of extreme of subject matter; some nearness to death; some call to courage. I myself was getting wild; I wanted wildness, originality, genius, rapture, hope. I wanted strength; not tea parties. What I sought in books was a world whose surfaces, whose people and events and days lived, actually matched the exaltation of the interior life. There you could live.

Those of us who read carried around with us like martyrs a secret knowledge, a secret joy, a secret hope: There is a life worth living where history is still taking place; there are ideas worth dying for, and circumstances where courage is still prized. This life could be found and joined, like the Resistance. I kept this exhilarating faith

alive in myself, concealed under my uniform shirt like an oblate's ribbon; I would not be parted from it.

—Annie Dillard

From 1992 to 2002, the gender gap in reading by young adults widened considerably. In overall book reading, young women slipped from 63 percent to 59 percent, while young men plummeted from 55 percent to 43 percent. Placed in historical perspective, these findings fit with a gap that has existed in the United States since the spread of mass publishing in the mid-19th century. But for the gap to have grown so much in so short a time suggests that what was formerly a moderate difference is fast becoming a decided marker of gender identity: Girls read; boys don't.

—Mark Bauerlein and  
Sandra Stotsky

Although one might expect the schools to be trying hard to make reading appealing to boys, the K-12 literature curriculum may in fact be contributing to the problem. It has long been known that there are strong differences between boys and girls in their literary preferences. According to reading interest surveys, both boys and girls are unlikely to choose books based on an 'issues' approach, and children are not interested in reading about ways to reform society or themselves. But boys prefer adventure tales, war, sports and historical nonfiction, while girls prefer stories about personal relationships and fantasy. Moreover, when given choices, boys do not choose stories that feature girls, while girls frequently select stories that appeal to boys.

Unfortunately, the textbooks and literature assigned in the elementary grades do not reflect the dispositions of male students. Few strong and active male role models can be found as lead characters. Gone are the inspiring biographies of the most important American presidents, inventors, scientists and entrepreneurs. No military valor, no high adventure. On the other hand, stories about adventurous and brave women abound. Publishers seem to be more interested in avoiding 'masculine' perspectives or 'stereotypes' than in getting boys to like what they are assigned to read.

—Mark Bauerlein and  
Sandra Stotsky

Schools often dismiss what boys like. No wonder they're not wild about reading. It's not that boys can't read, they just don't. Study after study reveals that boys read less than girls. And according to the *U.S. Department of Education*, school-age boys tend to read a grade and a half lower than girls. How can librarians get guys to turn the page? For starters, we need to move beyond our traditional 'here's a book you're going to love' approach. That strategy may work fine with some kids, but it's a tough sell to most boys.

Consider, for a moment, the experience of one of my colleagues. She tried everything she could think of to encourage her son to read. But nothing worked. Finally, late one night, the boy noticed a light shining beneath his younger sister's bedroom door. 'Why does she get to stay up past her bedtime?' he complained to his mother. Mom, quick on the draw, explained that his sister was reading her books in bed. 'And there's no bedtime curfew when you're reading,' she added. Now, her son stays up every evening, reading for hours.

The lesson to be learned? If we want to transform boys into lifelong readers, we need to discover what makes them tick. Equally important, we need to have a better grasp of the kind of reading that attracts them.

—Michael Sullivan

Boys read comic books, baseball cards, and cereal boxes. They are less likely to read books; and when they do, they often don't read the ones we want them to. There are many reasons for this, but the biggest one relates to role models. Boys identify with the men in their lives, and males, in general, don't read as many books as women. A 1996 study by Donald Pottorff, Deborah Phelps Zientarski, and Michelle Skovera ('Gender Perceptions of Elementary and Middle School Students About Literacy at Home and School' in the *Journal of Research and Development in Education*) shows that mothers are 10 times more likely to read books than fathers. On the other hand, dads are 10 times more likely to read newspapers than moms. What's the significance of this? Developmentally, boys view the world as a place filled with rules and tools, and their job is to understand how it works in order to get things done. Newspapers, helpful how-to manuals, and other brief, informative texts address this need admirably. But they don't provide boys with the sustained, language-rich reading experiences they need to become mature readers.

—Michael Sullivan

The best book is not one that informs merely, but one that stirs the reader up to inform himself.

—A. W. Tozer

I was in Nashville, Tennessee last year. After the show I went to a Waffle House. I'm not proud of it, I was hungry. And I'm alone, I'm eating and 'm reading a book, right? Waitress walks over to me: 'Hey, whatcha readin' for?' Isn't that the weirdest...question you've ever heard? Not what am I reading, but what am I reading FOR? Well, goddamnit, ya stumped me! Why do I read? Well . . . hmmm...I dunno...I guess I read for a lot of reasons and the main one is so I don't end up being a...waffle waitress.

--Bill Hicks

We shouldn't teach great books; we should teach a love of reading. Knowing the contents of a few works of literature is a trivial achievement. Being inclined to go on reading is a great achievement.

—B. F. Skinner

When a reader falls in love with a book, it leaves its essence inside him, like radioactive fallout in an arable field, and after that there are certain crops that will no longer grow in him, while other, stranger, more fantastic growths may occasionally be produced.

--Salman Rushdie

It's a rare book that wins the battle against drooping eyelids.

--Tracy Chevalier

Reading is an intelligent way of not having to think.

--Walter Moers

I'm always amazed at friends who say they try to read at night in bed but always end up falling asleep. I have the opposite problem. If a book is good I can't go to sleep, and stay up way past my bedtime, hooked on the writing. Is anything better than waking up after a late-night read and diving right back into the plot before you even get out of bed to brush your teeth?

--John Waters

Give yourself unto reading. The man who never reads will never be read; he who never quotes will never be quoted. He who will not use the thoughts of other men's brains, proves that he has no brains of his own. You need to read.

—Charles Haddon  
Spurgeon

Don't be amazed if you see my eyes always wandering. In fact, this is my way of reading, and it is only in this way that reading proves fruitful to me. If a book truly interests me, I cannot follow it for more than a few lines before my mind, having seized on a thought that the text suggests to it, or a feeling, or a question, or an image, goes off on a tangent and springs from thought to thought, from image to image, in an itinerary of reasonings and fantasies that I feel the need to pursue to the end, moving away from the book until I have lost sight of it. The stimulus of reading is indispensable to me, and of meaty reading, even if, of every book, I manage to read no more than a few pages. But those few pages already enclose for me whole universes, which I can never exhaust.

--Italo Calvino

It is both relaxing and invigorating to occasionally set aside the worries of life, seek the company of a friendly book...from the reading of 'good books' there comes a richness of life that can be obtained in no other way.

--Gordon B. Hinckley

When I am king they shall not have bread and shelter only, but also teachings out of books, for a full belly is little worth where the mind is starved.

--Mark Twain

I too hate long books: the better, the worse. If they're bad they merely make me pant with the effort of holding them up for a few minutes. But if they're good, I turn into a social moron for days, refusing to go out of my room, scowling and growling at interruptions, ignoring weddings and funerals, and making enemies out of friends. I still bear the scars of *Middlemarch*.

--Vikram Seth

I leapt eagerly into books. The characters' lives were so much more interesting than the lonely heartbeat of my own.

--Ruta Sepetys

I loathed every day and regret every day I spent in school. I like to be taught to read and write and add and then be left alone.

—Woody Allen

May I suggest that you all read? And often. Believe me, it's nice to have something to talk about other than the weather and the Queen's health. Your mind is not a cage. It's a garden. And it requires cultivating.

--Libba Bray

Literature is my Utopia. Here I am not disenfranchised. No barrier of the senses shuts me out from the sweet, gracious discourse of my book friends. They talk to me without embarrassment or awkwardness.

--Helen Keller

Reading... a vacation for the mind....

--Dave Barry

Reading was just a way to make her feel less alone, to keep her company. When you read something you are stopped, the moment is stayed, you can sometimes be there more fully than you can in your real life.

--Helen Humphreys



We lose ourselves in what we read, only to return to ourselves, transformed and part of a more expansive world.

--Judith Butler

I insist on a lot of time being spent, almost every day, to just sit and think. That is very uncommon in American business. I read and think. So I do more reading and thinking, and make less impulse decisions than most people in business. I do it because I like this kind of life.

--Warren Buffett

Readers may be divided into four classes: I. Sponges, who absorb all they read, and return it nearly in the same state, only a little dirtied. II. Sand-glasses, who retain nothing, and are content to get through a book for the sake of getting through the time. III. Strain-bags, who retain merely the dregs of what they read. IV. Mogul diamonds, equally rare and valuable, who profit by what they read, and enable others to profit by it also.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

I often find that a novel, even a well-written and compelling novel, can become a blur to me soon after I've finished reading it. I recollect perfectly the feeling of reading it, the mood I occupied, but I am less sure about the narrative details. It is almost as if the book were, as Wittgenstein said of his propositions, a ladder to be climbed and then discarded after it has served its purpose.

--Sven Birkerts

Deprived of their newspapers or a novel, reading-addicts will fall back onto cookery books, on the literature which is wrapped around bottles of patent medicine, on those instructions for keeping the contents crisp which are printed on the outside of boxes of breakfast cereals. On anything.

--Aldous Huxley

Reading is going toward something that is about to be, and no one yet knows what it will be.

--Italo Calvino

I never need to find time to read. When people say to me, 'Oh, yeah, I love reading. I would love to read, but I just don't have time,' I'm thinking, 'How can you not have time?' I read when I'm drying my hair. I read in the bath. I read when I'm sitting in the bathroom. Pretty much anywhere I can do the job one-handed, I read.

—J. K. Rowling

As you read a book word by word and page by page, you participate in its creation, just as a cellist playing a Bach suite participates, note by note, in the creation, the coming-to-be, the existence, of the music. And, as you read and re-read, the book of course participates in the creation of you, your thoughts and feelings, the size and temper of your soul.

--Ursula K. Le Guin

We read in bed because reading is halfway between life and dreaming, our own consciousness in someone else's mind.

--Anna Quindlen

I do not read a book; I hold a conversation with the author.

--Elbert Hubbard

The problem with a life spent reading is you know too much.

--Josh Lanyon

When evening comes, I return home and go into my study. On the threshold I strip off my muddy, sweaty, workday clothes, and put on the robes of court and palace, and in this graver dress I enter the antique courts of the ancients and am welcomed by them, and there I taste the food that alone is mine, and for which I was born. And there I make bold to speak to them and ask the motives of their actions, and they, in their humanity, reply to me. And for the space of four hours I forget the world, remember no vexation, fear poverty no more, tremble no more at death: I pass indeed into their world.

--Niccolò Machiavelli

I often feel sorry for people who don't read good books; they are missing a chance to lead an extra life.

--Scott Corbett

When we read, we decide when, where, how long, and about what. One of the few places on earth that it is still possible to experience an instant sense of freedom and privacy is anywhere you open up a good book and begin to read. When we read silently, we are alone with our own thoughts and one other voice. We can take our time, consider, evaluate, and digest what we read—with no commercial interruptions, no emotional music or special effects manipulation. And in spite of the advances in electronic information exchange, the book is still the most important medium for presenting ideas of substance and value, still the only real home of literature.

--Andrew Clements

When I'm reading, wherever I am, I'm always somewhere else.

--Rebecca Wells

That's what I do. Watch movies and read. Sometimes I even pretend to write, but I'm not fooling anyone. Oh, and I go to the mailbox.

--Nicole Krauss

Tucking my nose into a book makes me completely oblivious to my surroundings. I would have made a terrible spy in the army—the first person to hand me a novel would have been able to shoot my head clean off without me noticing.

--Alyxandra Harvey

Just as one spoils the stomach by overfeeding and thereby impairs the whole body, so can one overload and choke the mind by giving it too much nourishment. For the more one reads the fewer are the traces left of what one has read; the mind is like a tablet that has been written over and over. Hence it is impossible to reflect; and it is only by reflection that one can assimilate what one has read. If one reads straight ahead without pondering over it later, what has been read does not take root, but is for the most part lost.

--Arthur Schopenhauer

It is really hard to be lonely very long in a world of words. Even if you don't have friends somewhere, you still have language, and it will find you and wrap its little syllables around you and suddenly there will be a story to live in.

--Naomi Shihab Nye

The library in summer is the most wonderful thing because there you get books on any subject and read them each for only as long as they hold your interest, abandoning any that don't, halfway or a quarter of the way through if you like, and store up all that knowledge in the happy corners of your mind for your own self and not to show off how much you know or spit it back at your teacher on a test paper.

--Polly Horvath

Never force yourself to read a book that you do not enjoy. There are so many good books in the world that it is foolish to waste time on one that does not give you pleasure.

--Atwood H. Townsend

I am always chilled and astonished by the would-be writers who ask me for advice and admit, quite blithely, that they 'don't have time to read.' This is like a guy starting up Mount Everest saying that he didn't have time to buy any rope or pitons.

--Stephen King

Part of the experience of reading has always been collective. You learn to read with someone else. Yeah you may currently practice it in a solitary fashion, but reading is a collective enterprise. And what the unintelligible in a book does is to remind you how our whole lives we've always needed someone else to help us with reading.

--Junot Díaz

Oh for a book and a shady nook,  
Either indoors or out,  
with the green leaves whispering overhead,  
or the street cries all about.  
Where I may read at all my ease  
both of the new and old,  
For a jolly good book whereon to look  
is better to me than gold.

--John Wilson

Fiction has two uses. Firstly, it's a gateway drug to reading. The drive to know what happens next, to want to turn the page, the need to keep going, even if it's hard, because someone's in trouble and you have to know how it's all going to end ... that's a very real drive. And it forces you to learn new words, to think new thoughts, to keep going. To discover that reading per se is pleasurable. Once you learn that, you're on the road to reading everything. And reading is key. There were noises made briefly, a few years ago, about the idea that we were living in a post-literate world, in which the ability to make sense out of written words was somehow redundant, but those days are gone: words are more important than they ever were: we navigate the world with words, and as the world slips onto the web, we need to follow, to communicate and to comprehend what we are reading. People who cannot understand each other cannot exchange ideas, cannot communicate, and translation programs only go so far.

And the second thing fiction does is to build empathy. When you watch TV or see a film, you are looking at things happening to other people. Prose fiction is something you build up from 26 letters and a handful of punctuation marks, and you, and you alone, using your imagination, create a world and people it and look out through other eyes. You get to feel things, visit places and worlds you would never otherwise know. You learn that everyone else out there is a me, as well. You're being someone else, and when you return to your own world, you're going to be slightly changed. Empathy is a tool for building people into groups, for allowing us to function as more than self-obsessed individuals.

—Neil Gaiman

**HOW MANY OF THESE BOOK NERD PROBLEMS HAVE MADE YOU SAY  
'F\*\*\*\*'?**

Having someone spoil a big plot point when you weren't done reading.

Dropping your book and losing your spot because your bookmark fell out.

Turning the page and accidentally giving yourself a paper cut.

Reading outside when it's too windy and your pages keep involuntarily turning.

Seeing a movie that just didn't do that book justice.

Flipping toward the end of a book and accidentally spoiling something for yourself.

Dropping your book in the bathtub when you were just trying to relax.

Or getting pages of a book wet in any way, for that matter.

Letting someone borrow a book and having it returned in poor condition.

Paying a late library fee.

Dog-earring pages.

Promising to go to a party when you really want to stay home and read.

Missing a stop on your bus/train/subway because you were reading.

Crying in public during a really emotional scene.

Reading a book THAT ENDS ON A CLIFFHANGER.

Realizing how long you (still) have to wait for George R.R. Martin's next book.

Accidentally ripping the paper when you turn the page.

**WHEN YOUR FAVORITE CHARACTER DIES.**

Reading on your e-reader and the battery dies.

Having to pay extra because your suitcase is too heavy with books.

Watching a movie that has a different ending from the book.

Finding a booger in the pages of a borrowed library book.

Or, honestly, finding ANY mysterious stain in a borrowed library book.

Accidentally showing up to a bookstore an hour before it opens.

Spotting online articles that claim nobody reads anymore.

Filling up every inch of your bookshelf when you don't have room for more.

Looking at your 'to be read' pile.

Finding out your favorite author is problematic.

Spilling coffee/tea/anything on your book.

And finally, when the spine of your book cracks and pages start falling out when you're trying to read.

—Farrah Penn

It was not a matter of believing or disbelieving what I read, but of feeling something new, of being affected by something that made the look of the world different.

--Richard Wright

We never stop reading, although every book comes to an end, just as we never stop living, although death is certain.

—Roberto Bolano

No man understands a deep book until he has seen and lived at least part of its contents.

--Ezra Pound

Reading is my passion and my escape since I was 5 years old. Overall, children don't realize the magic that can live inside their own heads. Better even than any movie.

--Eckhart Tolle

If I could always read I should never feel the want of company.

--George Gordon Byron

I wanted to know what it was like to be a drug addict, and have an eating disorder, and have a loved one die, and fall in love. I saw my friends going through these things, I saw the world going through these things, and I needed to understand them. I needed to make sense of them. Books didn't make me wallow in darkness, darkness made me wallow in books, and it was books that showed me there is light at the end of the tunnel.

--Jackson Pearce

The walls of books around him, dense with the past, formed a kind of insulation against the present world and its disasters.

--Ross Macdonald

Books are like truth serum—if you don't read, you can't figure out what's real.

--Rodman Philbrick

Reading is the royal road to intellectual eminence...Truly good books are more than mines to those who can understand them. They are the breathings of the great souls of past times. Genius is not embalmed in them, but lives in them perpetually.

—William Ellery  
Channing

I read in self-defense.

--Woody Allen

The man who has not the habit of reading is imprisoned in his immediate world, in respect to time and space. His life falls into a set routine; he is limited to contact and conversation with a few friends and acquaintances, and he sees only what happens in his immediate neighbourhood. From this prison there is no escape. But the moment he takes up a book, he immediately enters a different world, and if it is a good book, he is immediately put in touch with one of the best talkers of the world. This talker leads him on and carries him into a different country or a different age, or unburdens to him some of his personal regrets, or discusses with him some special line or aspect of life that the reader knows nothing about. An ancient author puts him in communion with a dead spirit of long ago, and as he reads along, he begins to imagine what the ancient author looked like and what type of person he was.

--Lin Yutang

You will learn most things by looking, but reading gives understanding. Reading will make you free.

--Paul Rand

Consider a small child sitting on his mother's lap while she reads him a picture book. The picture book opens to a width that effectively places the child at the center of a closed circle—that of mother's body, arms, and the picture book... That circle, so private and intimate, is a place apart from the demands and stresses of daily life, a sanctuary in and from which the child can explore the many worlds offered in picture books. Despite all of our society's technological advances, it still just takes one child, one book, and one reader, to create this unique space, to work this everyday magic.

--Martha V. Parravano

I must judge for myself, but how can I judge, how can any man judge, unless his mind has been opened and enlarged by reading.

--John Adams

Reading, for me, is like this: consumptive, pleasing, calming, as much as edifying. It's how I feel after a good dinner. That's why I do it so often: It feels wonderful. The book is mind and I insert myself into it, cover it entire, ear my way through every last slash and dot. That's something you can do with a book, unlike television or movies or the Internet. You can eat it, or mark it, like a dog does on a hydrant.

--Tara Bray Smith

When you read books you almost feel like you're out there in the world. Like you're going on this adventure right with the main character.

—Matt de la Pena

I hate it when people apologize for what they read. Some bestsellers aren't exactly literary. So what? They're fun and rip-roaring, Who instituted the book police and why do we have to answer them? Grrrrr!

--Jennifer Donnelly

What would happen if we never read the classics? There comes a point in life, it seems to me, where you have to decide whether you're a Person of Letters or merely someone who loves books, and I'm beginning to see that the book lovers have more fun.

--Nick Hornby



One of the best things about reading is that you'll always have something to think about when you're not reading.

--James Patterson

Reading is a dialog with oneself; it is self-reflection, which cultivates profound humanity. Reading is therefore essential to our development. It expands and enriches the personality like a seed that germinates after a long time and sends forth many blossom-laden branches.

People who can say of a book, 'this changed my life' truly understand the meaning of happiness. Reading that sparks inner revolution is desperately needed to escape drowning in the rapidly advancing information society. Reading is more than intellectual ornamentation; it is a battle for the establishment for the self, a ceaseless challenge that keeps us young and vigorous.

--Daisaku Ikeda

When I was a child, it was a matter of pride that I could plow through a Nancy Drew story in one afternoon, and begin another in the evening. . . . I was probably trying to impress the librarians who kept me supplied with books.

--Kathleen Norris

If you're wondering how you'll find time, it means you don't really want to read. Because nobody's ever got time. Children certainly haven't, nor have teenagers or grown-ups. Life always gets in the way.

Time to read is always time stolen.

Stolen from what?

From the tyranny of living.

—Daniel Pennac

I often read aloud to myself in my writing corner in the library, where no one can hear me, for the sake of better savouring the text, so as to make it all the more mine.

--Alberto Manguel

Read... read all the time... read as a matter of principle, as a matter of self-respect. Read as a nourishing staple of life.

--David McCullough Jr.

No one reads; if someone does read, he doesn't understand; if he understands, he immediately forgets.

--Stanisław Lem

Once the disease of reading has laid hold upon the system it weakens it so that it falls an easy prey to that other scourge which dwells in the ink pot and festers in the quill. The wretch takes to writing.

--Virginia Woolf, Orlando

A capacity, and taste, for reading, gives access to whatever has already been discovered by others. It is the key, or one of the keys, to the already solved problems. And not only so. It gives a relish, and facility, for successfully pursuing the [yet] unsolved ones.

--Abraham Lincoln

As adults we choose our own reading material. Depending on our moods and needs we might read the newspaper, a blockbuster novel, an academic article, a women's magazine, a comic, a children's book, or the latest book that just about everyone is reading. No one chastises us for our choice. No one says, 'That's too short for you to read.' No one says, 'That's too easy for you, put it back.' No one says 'You couldn't read that if you tried—it's much too difficult.'

Yet if we take a peek into classrooms, libraries, and bookshops we will notice that children's choices are often mocked, censured, and denied as valid by idiotic, interfering teachers, librarians, and parents. Choice is a personal matter that changes with experience, changes with mood, and changes with need. We should let it be.

--Mem Fox

Bill Gates (and his successor at Microsoft, Ray Ozzie) are famous for taking annual reading vacations. During the year they deliberately cultivate a stack of reading material—much of it unrelated to their day-to-day focus at Microsoft—and then they take off for a week or two and do a deep dive into the words they've stockpiled. By compressing their intake into a matter of days, they give new ideas additional opportunities to network among themselves, for the simple reason that it's easier to remember something that you read yesterday than it is to remember something you read six months ago.

--Steven Johnson

Read what gives you delight—at least most of the time—and do so without shame. And even if you are that rare sort of person who is delighted chiefly by what some people call Great Books, don't make them your steady intellectual diet, any more than you would eat at the most elegant of restaurants every day. It would be too much. Great books are great in part because of what they ask of their readers: they are not readily encountered, easily assessed.

--Alan Jacobs

He loves to read. He loves the whisper of the pages and the way his fingertips catch on rough paper, the pour of the words up from the leaves, through soft light, into his eyes, the mute voice in his ears.

--Keith Miller

I look at every book as a self-help book.

--Marc Maron

I will read long books and the journals of dead writers. I will feel closer to them than I ever felt to people I used to know before I withdrew from the world. It will be sweet and cool this friendship of mine with dead poets, for I won't have to touch them or answer their questions. They will talk to me and not expect me to answer. And I'll get sleepy listening to their voices explaining the mysteries to me. I'll fall asleep with the book still in my fingers.

--Tennessee Williams

Like the bodies of dancers or athletes, the minds of readers are genuinely happy and self-possessed only when cavorting around, doing their stretches and leaps and jumps to the tune of words.

--Lynne Sharon Schwartz

The world belongs to those who read.

--Rick Holland

The first time I read an excellent work, it is to me just as if I gained a new friend; and when I read over a book I have perused before, it resembles the meeting of an old one.

--James Goldsmith

I think we ought to read only books that bite and sting us. If the book we are reading doesn't shake us awake like a blow on the skull, why bother reading it in the first place? So that it can make us happy, as you put it? Good God, we'd be just as happy if we had no books at all; books that make us happy we could, in a pinch, also write ourselves. What we need are books that hit us like a most painful misfortune, like the death of someone we loved more than we love ourselves, that make us feel as though we had been banished to the woods, far from any human presence, like a suicide. A book must be the axe for the frozen sea within us. That is what I believe.

--Franz Kafka

He always thinks because I'm reading, I'm not doing anything. There is no greater plague to an introvert than the extroverted.

--Pierce Brown

Confession: Sometimes I ask family members for permission before I start a particularly delicious novel.

I'd like to think I'm a marginally responsible human being. I meet deadlines. I pay bills on time. I try to return favors, listen closely, and be a supportive partner, friend, and coworker. But all of that goes out the window when I'm reading a novel. I'm instantly sucked into a vortex of the novelist's making; reality need not apply here. Go ahead, ask me the same question six times. It's not that I'm ignoring you; it's that I'm trapped in novel-land and haven't heard a word you've said. Invite me to dinner and I'll politely decline—Sorry, Patricia, but I've got a date with Jane Austen tonight. And suggest I come to bed? Now? But there are only 28 more chapters left until the end!

I emerge from my book like I'm freshly returned from a week-long vacation. My mind is clear, my heart is full, and I am tremendously happy. So what if I only had popcorn for dinner last night? I've explored new worlds, made fictional friends, and arrived back on earth all the better for it.

—Nicki Porter

*The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* illustrates the greatest heights and the lowest depths of America's history and potential, while, more than any other work, showing the power of literacy—that when a person can read and write, he gains the ability to create his own narrative, and to shape his life and the surrounding world.

—Carey Cranston

My father was pretty well fixed, and I being the only male son he tried terribly hard to make something out of me. He sent me to about every school in that part of the country. In some of them I would last for three or four months. I got just as far as the fourth reader when the teachers wouldn't seem to be running the school right, and rather than have the school stop I would generally leave.

Then I would start in at another school, tell them I had just finished the third reader and was ready for the fourth. Well, I knew all this fourth grade by heart, so the teacher would remark:

'I never see you studying, yet you seem to know your lessons.' I had that education thing figured down to a fine point. Three years in *McGuffey's Fourth Reader*, and I knew more about it than McGuffey did.

—Will Rogers

A man only learns by two things, one his reading and the other is association with smarter people.

—Will Rogers

Life happened because I turned the pages.

--Alberto Manguel

All good and true book-lovers practice the pleasing and improving avocation of reading in bed ... No book can be appreciated until it has been slept with and dreamed over.

--Eugene Field

My idea of comfort is a good lamp to read by.

—Lucien Rees Roberts

The first time I read an excellent book, it is to me just as if I had gained a new friend. When I read a book over I have perused before, it resembles the meeting with an old one.

--Oliver Goldsmith

It had always fascinated him that she'd consumed so many words, that her head was full of stories, told a thousand different ways.

--Sarah Addison Allen

In reading, friendship is restored immediately to its original purity. With books there is no forced sociability. If we pass the evening with those friends—books—it's because we really want to. When we leave them, we do so with regret and, when we have left them, there are none of those thoughts that spoil friendship: 'What did they think of us?'—'Did we make a mistake and say something tactless?'—'Did they like us?'—nor is there the anxiety of being forgotten because of displacement by someone else. All such agitating thoughts expire as we enter the pure and calm friendship of reading.

--Marcel Proust

This is what reading is like to me. It's finding a spring in the midst of a barren land. Just when I think I might up and die of thirst, I stumble onto this fresh, cold water, and I'm suddenly given this new life because I can-and do-drink to my heart's content.

--Beverly Lewis

You can be too rich and too thin, but you can never be too well read or too curious about the world.

--Tim Gunn

Samuel rode lightly on top of a book and he balanced happily among ideas the way a man rides white rapids in a canoe. But Tom got into a book, crawled and groveled between the covers, tunneled like a mole among the thoughts, and came up with the book all over his face and hands.

--John Steinbeck

Reading fiction is important. It is a vital means of imagining a life other than our own, which in turn makes us more empathetic beings. Following complex story lines stretches our brains beyond the 140 characters of sound-bite thinking, and staying within the world of a novel gives us the ability to be quiet and alone, two skills that are disappearing faster than the polar icecaps.

--Ann Patchett

I shall keep my book on the table here, and read a little every morning as soon as I wake, for I know it will do me good, and help me through the day.

--Louisa May Alcott

Without knowing it, the adults in our lives practiced a most productive kind of behavior modification. After our chores and household duties were done we were given 'permission' to read. In other words, our elders positioned reading as a privilege—a much sought-after prize, granted only to those good-hard-workers who earned it. How clever of them.

—Mildred Armstrong  
Kalish

Reading poetry is like undressing before a bath. You don't undress out of fear that your clothes will become wet. You undress because you want the water to touch you. You want to completely immerse yourself in the feeling of the water and to emerge anew.

--Kamand Kojouri

Imagination is at the heart of everything we do. Scientific discoveries couldn't have happened without imagination. Art, music, and literature couldn't exist without imagination. And so anything that strengthens imagination, and reading certainly does that, can help us for the rest of our lives.

--Lloyd Alexander

You can never be wise unless you love reading.

--Samuel Johnson

The sum of things to be known is inexhaustible, and however long we read, we shall never come to the end of our story-book.

—A. E. Housman

We are liable to miss the best of life if we do not know how to tingle, if we do not learn to hoist ourselves just a little higher than we generally are in order to sample the rarest and ripest fruit of art which human thought has to offer.

--Vladimir Nabokov

Give me...a good book, or a good newspaper, and sit me down afore a good fire, and I ask no better.

—Charles Dickens

Through our reading we can travel to other times and other places, into other peoples minds and hearts and souls: it is a transcendent experience.

--Louise DeSalvo

Yesterday I happened to notice in the mirror that while I have long since grown used to my beard being very grey indeed, I was not prepared to discover that my eyebrows are becoming noticeably shaggy. I feel the tomb is just around the corner. And there are all these books I haven't read yet, even if I am simultaneously reading at least twenty.

--Edward Gorey

Reading is not simply an intellectual pursuit but an emotional and spiritual one. It lights the candle in the hurricane lamp of self; that's why it survives.

—Anna Quindlen

The simplest way to make sure that we raise literate children is to teach them to read, and to show them that reading is a pleasurable activity. And that means, at its simplest, finding books that they enjoy, giving them access to those books, and letting them read them.

—Neil Gaiman

Reading and writing are in themselves subversive acts. What they subvert is the notion that things have to be the way they are, that you are alone, that no one has ever felt the way you have.

--Kurt Vonnegut

I don't think there is such a thing as a bad book for children. Every now and again it becomes fashionable among some adults to point at a subset of children's books, a genre, perhaps, or an author, and to declare them bad books, books that children should be stopped from reading. I've seen it happen over and over; Enid Blyton was declared a bad author, so was RL Stine, so were dozens of others. Comics have been decried as fostering illiteracy.

It's tosh. It's snobbery and it's foolishness. There are no bad authors for children, that children like and want to read and seek out, because every child is different. They can find the stories they need to, and they bring themselves to stories. A hackneyed, worn-out idea isn't hackneyed and worn out to them. This is the first time the child has encountered it. Do not discourage children from reading because you feel they are reading the wrong thing. Fiction you do not like is a route to other books you may prefer. And not everyone has the same taste as you.

—Neil Gaiman

Well-meaning adults can easily destroy a child's love of reading: stop them reading what they enjoy, or give them worthy-but-dull books that you like, the 21st-century equivalents of Victorian 'improving' literature. You'll wind up with a generation convinced that reading is uncool and worse, unpleasant.

—Neil Gaiman

If you were trapped in an impossible situation, in an unpleasant place, with people who meant you ill, and someone offered you a temporary escape, why wouldn't you take it? And escapist fiction is just that: fiction that opens a door, shows the sunlight outside, gives you a place to go where you are in control, are with people you want to be with (and books are real places, make no mistake about that); and more importantly, during your escape, books can also give you knowledge about the world and your predicament, give you weapons, give you armor: real things you can take back into your prison. Skills and knowledge and tools you can use to escape for real.

—Neil Gaiman

We have an obligation to read for pleasure, in private and in public places. If we read for pleasure, if others see us reading, then we learn, we exercise our imaginations. We show others that reading is a good thing....We have an obligation to read aloud to our children. To read them things they enjoy. To read to them stories we are already tired of. To do the voices, to make it interesting, and not to stop reading to them just because they learn to read to themselves. Use reading-aloud time as bonding time, as time when no phones are being checked, when the distractions of the world are put aside.

—Neil Gaiman



I could almost hear the characters inside, murmuring and jostling, impatient for me to open the cover and let them out.

--Jennifer Donnelly

I never travel without my diary. One should always have something sensational to read in the train.

--Oscar Wilde

In my ideal life I'd be left alone to read.

--Elizabeth Knox

The joy of reading a book is not knowing what happens next.

— Christopher Nolan

Resolve to edge in a little reading every day, if it is but a single sentence. If you gain fifteen minutes a day, it will make itself felt at the end of the year.

--Horace Mann

For centuries, no one was concerned that books weren't girl-friendly, because no one really cared if girls read; but even so, we persisted for long enough that literature has slowly come to accommodate us. Modern boys, by contrast, are not trying to read in a culture of opposition. Nobody is telling them reading doesn't matter, that boys don't need to read and that actually, no prospective wife looks for literacy in a husband. Quite the opposite! Male literary culture thrives, both teachers and parents are throwing books at their sons, and the fact that the books aren't sticking isn't, as the nature of the complaint makes clear, because boys don't like reading—no. The accusation is that boys don't like reading about girls, which is a totally different matter.

Because constantly, consistently, our supposedly equal society penalises boys who express an interest in anything feminine. The only time boys are discouraged from books all together is in contexts where, for whatever reason, they've been given the message that reading itself is girly—which is a wider extrapolation of the same problem.

--Foz Meadows

Learning to read is probably the most difficult and revolutionary thing that happens to the human brain and if you don't believe that, watch an illiterate adult try to do it.

--John Steinbeck

Reading requires actual concentration. If you skipped a paragraph, or even an important sentence, you could lose the entire story. With most TV shows, though, you didn't have to concentrate at all. You could space out for a good ten minutes, then come back and still figure out what was going on.

--Daniel Ehrenhaft

The reader who plucks a book from her shelf only once is as deprived as the listener who, after attending a single performance of a Beethoven symphony, never hears it again.

--Anne Fadiman

Life is limited, but by writing, and reading, we can live in different worlds, get inside the skins and minds of other people, and, in this way, push out the boundaries of our own lives.

--Joan Lingard

The delights of reading impart the vivacity of youth even to old age.

—Isaac D'Israeli

An attentive reader will always learn more, and more quickly, from good authors than from life.

--Hervé Le Tellier

If you read a story that really involves you, your body will tell you that you are living through the experience. You will recognize feelings that have physical signs—increased heart rate, sweaty palms, or calm, relaxed breathing and so on, depending on your mood. These effects are the same you would feel in similar real-life experiences—fear, anger, interest, joy, shame or sadness. Amazingly, you can actually 'live' experience without moving anything but your eyes across a page.

--Joseph Gold

I look forward all day to evening, and then I put an 'engaged' on the door and get into my nice red bath robe and furry slippers and pile all the cushions behind me on the couch, and light the brass student lamp at my elbow, and read and read and read. One book isn't enough. I have four going at once. Just now, they're Tennyson's poems and 'Vanity Fair' and Kipling's 'Plain Tales' and—don't laugh—'Little Women.' I find that I am the only girl in college who wasn't brought up on 'Little Women.' I haven't told anybody though (that would stamp me as queer). I just quietly went and bought it with \$1.12 of my last month's allowance; and the next time somebody mentions pickled limes, I'll know what she is talking about!

--Jean Webster

To be kept waiting is unfortunate, but to be kept waiting with nothing interesting to read is a tragedy of Greek proportions.

--Maryrose Wood

As one tends to the graves of the dead, so I tend the books. I clean them, do minor repairs, keep them in good order. And every day I open a volume or two, read a few lines or pages, allow the voices of the forgotten dead to resonate inside my head. Do they sense it, these dead writers, when their books are read? Does a pinprick of light appear in their darkness? Is their soul stirred by the feather touch of another mind reading theirs? I do hope so, for it must be very lonely being dead.

--Diane Setterfield

Men of power have not time to read, yet men who do not read are not fit for power.

--Michael Foot

I am a man without many pleasures in life, a man whose few pleasures are small, but a man whose small pleasures are very important to him. One of them is eating. One reading. Another reading while eating.

--Amanda Filipacchi

To enjoy and learn from what you read you must understand the meanings of the words a writer uses. You do yourself a grave disservice if you read around words you don't know, or worse, merely guess at what they mean without bothering to look them up. For me, reading has always been not only a quest for pleasure and enlightenment but also a word-hunting expedition, a lexical safari.

—Charles Harrington  
Elster

We need the slower and more lasting stimulus of solitary reading as a relief from the pressure on eye, ear and nerves of the torrent of information and entertainment pouring from ever-open electronic jaws. It could end by stupefying us.

--Storm Jameson

Here's what I love: when a great writer turns me into a Jew from Chicago, a lesbian out of South Carolina, or a black woman moving into a subway entrance in Harlem. Turn me into something else, writers of the world. Make me Muslim, heretic, hermaphrodite. Put me into a crusader's armor, a cardinal's vestments. Let me feel the pygmy's heartbeat, the queen's breast, the torturer's pleasure, the Nile's taste, or the nomad's thirst. Tell me everything that I must know. Hold nothing back.

—Pat Conroy

To look at the paper is to raise a seashell to one's ear and to be overwhelmed by the roar of humanity.

--Alain de Botton

There must be a secret hidden in this book or else you wouldn't bother to read it.

—Kathy Acker

One of the things reading does do is discipline your mind.

—Jeanette Winterson

They assign things to students which are way over their heads, which destroys your love of reading, rather than leading you to it. I don't understand that.

—Charles M. Schulz

I spent much of my prison time reading. I must have read over 200 large books, mostly fictional stories about the American pioneers, the Vikings, Mafia, etc. As long as I was engrossed in a book, I was not in prison. Reading was my escape.

—Frazier Glenn  
Miller Jr.

Oh, magic hour when a child first knows it can read printed words!

For quite a while, Francie had been spelling out letters, sounding them and then putting the sounds together to mean a word. But, one day, she looked at a page and the word 'mouse' had instantaneous meaning. She looked at the word, and a picture of a gray mouse scampered through her mind. She looked further and when she saw 'horse,' she heard him pawing the ground and saw the sun glint on his glossy coat. The word 'running' hit her suddenly and she breathed hard as though running herself. The barrier between the individual sound of each letter and the whole meaning of the word was removed and the printed word meant a thing at one quick glance. She read a few pages rapidly and almost became ill with excitement. She wanted to shout it out. She could read! She could read!

From that time on, the world was hers for the reading. She would never be lonely again, never miss the lack of intimate friends. Books became her friends and there was one for every mood. There was poetry for quiet companionship. There was adventure when she tired of quiet hours. There would be love stories when she came to adolescence and when she wanted to feel a closeness to someone she could read a biography. On that day when she first knew she could read, she made a vow to read one book a day as long as she lived.

—Betty Smith

To write is to carve a new path through the terrain of the imagination, or to point out new features on a familiar route. To read is to travel through that terrain with the author as a guide—a guide one might not always agree with or trust, but who can at least be counted on to take one somewhere.

—Rebecca Solnit

What are we after when we open one of those books? What is it that makes a classic a classic? ... in old-fashioned terms, the answer is that it will elevate your spirit. And that's why I can't take much stock in the idea of going through a list of books or 'covering' a fixed number of selections, or anyway striving for the blessed state of having read this, or the other. Having read a book means nothing. Reading a book may be the most tremendous experience of your life; having read it is an item in your memory, part of your receding past... Why we have that odd faith in the magic of having read a book, I don't know. We don't apply the same principle elsewhere: We don't believe in having heard Mendelssohn's violin concerto... I say, don't read the classics—try to discover your own classics; every life has its own.

—Rudolf Flesch

Just as pilots gain practice with flight simulators, people might acquire social experience by reading fiction.

—Raymond A. Mar

We profit little by books we do not enjoy.

—John Lubbock

Almost I feel the pulsebeat of the ages,  
Now swift, now slow, beneath my fingertips.  
The heartthrobs of the prophets and the sages  
Beat through these bindings; and my quick hand slips  
Old books from dusty shelves, in eager seeking  
For truths the flaming tongues of the ancients tell;  
For the words of wisdom that they still are speaking  
As clearly as an echoing silver bell.  
Here is the melody that lies forever  
At the deep heart of living; here we keep  
The accurate recorded discs that never  
Can be quite silenced, though their makers sleep  
The still deep sleep, so long as a seeker finds  
The indelible imprint of their moving minds.

—Grace Noll Crowell

To read is to withdraw. To make oneself unavailable. One would feel easier about it if the pursuit itself were less...selfish.

—Alan Bennett

If you like fantasy and you want to be the next Tolkien, don't read big Tolkienesque fantasies—Tolkien didn't read big Tolkienesque fantasies, he read books on Finnish philology. Go and read outside of your comfort zone, go and learn stuff.

—Neil Gaiman

There've been millions and billions and billions and gazillions of people that have lived before all of us. There's no new problem you can have with your parents, with school, with a bully, with anything, there's no problem you can have that someone hasn't already solved and wrote about it in a book.

—Will Smith

No days, perhaps, of all our childhood are ever so fully lived as those that we had regarded as not being lived at all: days spent wholly with a favourite book.

—Marcel Proust

Reading good literature is an experience of pleasure...but it is also an experience of learning what and how we are, in our human integrity and our human imperfection, with our actions, our dreams, and our ghosts, alone and in relationships that link us to others, in our public image and in the secret recesses of our consciousness.

—Mario Vargas Llosa

The endless piles of genre fiction are the key to happiness. They're the key to picking out the things that actually make you happy in this world instead of the things that you're told are good for you. Ninety percent of everything you read is going to be crap one way or the other, so make sure it's the crap that makes you smile, and don't apologize for it.

—Steven Lloyd Wilson

With so much reading ahead of you, the temptation might be to speed up. But in fact it's essential to slow down and read every word. Because one important thing that can be learned by reading slowly is the seemingly obvious but oddly under-appreciated fact that language is the medium we use in much the same way a composer uses notes, the way a painter uses paint. I realize it may seem obvious, but it's surprising how easily we lose sight of the fact that words are the raw material out of which literature is crafted.

—Francine Prose

'I remember that story. You have read it four times.' Samson shrugged. 'Why should I stop with the first reading? Nobody says, 'That was a fine piece of music. I'll never listen to that again.' But some people treat books that way. Not I!'

—Karen A. Wyle

Since the age of five I had been one of those people who was an indefatigable reader, more inclined to go off by myself with a book than do any of the dozens of things that children usually do to amuse themselves. I never aged out of it.

—Anna Quindlen

Read a lot. But read as a writer, to see how other writers are doing it. And make your knowledge of literature in English as deep and broad as you can. In workshops, writers are often told to read what is being written now, but if that is all you read, you are limiting yourself. You need to get a good overall sense of English literary history, so you can write out of that knowledge.

—Theodora Goss

The great opposition to reading is what I allow to fill my time instead of reading. To say we have no time to read is not really true; we simply have chosen to use our time for other things, or have allowed our time to be filled to the exclusion of reading. So don't add reading to your to-do list. Just stop doing the things that keep you from doing it. But read.

—James Emery White

It may be escapist, but if I have a choice between watching the news or reading a book which gets me to see the world through different eyes, I will always choose the latter!

—Christina Westover

A classroom atmosphere that promotes reading does not come from the furniture and its placement as much as it comes from the teacher's expectation that students will read.

—Donalyn Miller

The true felicity of a lover of books is the luxurious turning of page by page, the surrender, not meanly abject, but deliberate and cautious, with your wits about you, as you deliver yourself into the keeping of the book. This I call reading.

—Edith Wharton

Hurried reading can never be good reading.

—G. J. Goschen

Reading a great work of literature can truly be likened to having a conversation with a great mind.

—Jennie Chancey

I think the reason why I don't read so much, is because as I have observed, whole books all boil down to a drop of essence. You can read a book full of ten thousand words and at the end, sum it up in one sentence; I am more for the one sentence. I am more for the essence. It's like how you need a truckload of roses to extract one drop of rose oil; I don't want to bother with the truckload of roses because I would rather walk away with the drop of rose oil. So in my mind, I have written two hundred books. Why? Because I have with me two hundred vials with one drop of essence in each!

—C. JoyBell C.

I generally read every night before I fall asleep: Brad does too. I find it comforting to lie beside my husband, each of us with a book in our hands. I see it as a period of calm and intimacy, and as the perfect metaphor-together, yet individual-for our marriage.

—Debbie Macomber

In reading, it is not quantity so much that tells, as quality and thoroughness of digestion.

—Sir Arthur Quiller  
Couch

Wisdom, ambition, sadness, joy, malice, grief, amazement, all the emotions which blaze within the human soul may be recorded on a page. Nestled in a sheaf of paper sleeps an infinity beyond the limits of the universe. Just by opening a single page, we may fly into that infinity.

—Tanigawa Nagaru

Writing does not exist unless there is someone to read it, and each reader will take something different from a novel, from a chapter, from a line.

—Claire Fuller

I learned from the age of two or three that any room in our house, at any time of day, was there to read in, or be read to.

—Eudora Welty



I perceived quite early that I was a reader, and most of the people I came into contact with were not. It made a barrier. What they wanted to talk about were things they had eaten, touched, or done. What I wanted to talk about was what I had read.

—Frederik Pohl

In an established love of reading there is a policy of insurance guaranteeing certain happiness till death.

—A. Edward Newton

The neat sorting out of books into age-groups, so dear to publishers, has only a very sketchy relation with the habits of any real readers. Those of us who are blamed when old for reading childish books were blamed when children for reading books too old for us. No reader worth his salt trots along in obedience to a time-table.

—C. S. Lewis

I suppose if I had to give a one-word answer to the question of why I read, that word would be pleasure. The kind of pleasure you can get from reading is like no other in the world.

—Wendy Lesser

Learning to decipher words had only added to the pleasures of holding spines and turning pages, measuring the journey to the end with a thumb-riffle, poring over frontispieces. Books! Opening with a crackle of old glue, releasing perfume; closing with a solid thump.

—John Crowley

I don't read...boring things. Life is too short.

—György Ligeti

In bed with a book, the spell of television feels remote compared to the journey into the page. To be in a book. To slip into the crease where two pages meet, to live in the place where your eyes alight upon the words to ignite a world of smoke and peril, colour and serene delight. That is a journey no one can end with the change of a channel. Enduring magic.

—Ann-Marie MacDonald

We're suggesting that [kids are] missing something if they don't read but, actually, we're condemning kids to a lesser life. If you had a sick patient, you would not try to entice them to take their medicine. You would tell them, 'Take this or you're going to die.' We need to tell kids flat out: reading is not optional.

—Walter Dean Myers

Wide reading is important. You don't have to like it, but it's important to grapple with things you don't understand. I've been spending the last six months getting up an hour early to try to understand economics because I need to. I don't want to be one of these bewildered schmucks. The things that you understand will inform your writing. The bigger your mind, the better your work is going to be. You're not born with a big mind; you have to build it. If I don't read for an hour a day, I get ill.

—Jeanette Winterson

There are forces working in the world as never before in the history of mankind for standardization, for the regimentation of us all, or what I like to call making muffins of us, muffins all like every other muffin in the muffin tin. This is the limited universe, the drying dissipating universe that we can help our children to avoid by providing them with 'explosive material capable of stirring up fresh life endlessly'.

—Madeleine L'Engle

Books whose topics I thoroughly despise are acceptable because they often force the reader to think and to examine his own beliefs. In an age where most people are either blindly obedient or radical, exposing oneself to the ideas contained in even the most controversial of books is a good thing.

—Tiffini Johnson

Confronted with the choice between having time and having things, we've chosen to have things. Today it is a luxury to read what Socrates said, not because the books are expensive, but because our time is scarce.

—Gabriel Zaid

You know what I can't stand? I can't stand the words 'reading for pleasure.' All these parents—most of whom haven't read a single book since high school, unless maybe they picked up *THE DA VINCE CODE*—drag their kids in here every summer and say, 'Find something to read for pleasure,' which just means that most of the time the message these kids are getting is that reading is not pleasurable. Do you see how that works? It's like reading is a punishment. I hate that.

—Sue Halpern

Life and reading are not separate activities. When you read a great book, you don't escape from life, you plunge deeper into it.

—Julian Barnes

We read to find life, in all its possibilities.

—Claire Messud

Chapter breaks are not so readers have a place to stop reading; they're the breath to take before the roller coaster plummets down the hill.

—Julie Wright

Reading books for pleasure, of course, is the greatest joy. No need to underline, press on, try out mentally summarizing or evaluating phrases. One is free to read as a child reads—no duties, no goals, no responsibilities, no clock ticking: pure rapture.

—Edmund White

When you stand in the darkness, when you have lost all hope, when you can't see any path to walk ahead, read; reading will act as the lantern to show you the path. It might not take you to the destination, but it will keep on guiding you towards a resolution.

—Neelabh Pratap Singh

People read to be amused, to pass the time, I never read to be instructed; I read to be taken out of myself, to become ecstatic. I'm always looking for the author who can take me out of myself.

—Henry Miller

I am a product of the books that I've read throughout my life.

—Bill Walton

There is, at its center, something immutably miraculous about the substance and process of reading stories. We read because we hunger to know, to empathize, to feel, to connect, to laugh, to fear, to wonder, and to become, with each page, more than ourselves. To become creatures with souls. We read because it allows us, through force of mind, to hold hands, touch lives, speak as another speaks, listen as another listens, and feel as another feels. We read because we wish to journey forth together. There is, despite everything, a place for empathy and compassion and rumination, and just knowing that fact, for me, is an occasion for joy. That we still, in this frenetic and bombastic and self-centered age, have legions of people who can and do return to the quietness of the page, opening their minds and hearts, again and again, to the wild world and the stuff of life, pinned into scenes and characters and sharp images and pretty sentences—well. It sure feels like a miracle, doesn't it?

—Kelly Barnhill

Reading provides nourishment for hungers we might not even be aware of. How often have I chosen a book at random and found in it an answer I didn't realize I was seeking.

—Beth Ann Fennelly

I read because I love it... The noise of my life demands that I find daily solitude within the pages of my books. I can think and grow and dream. I am happier when I make time to read, and I feel stressed and anxious when I don't read for a few days. Reading centers me.

—Donalyn Miller

For reasons we've explored, children struggling to read aren't going to be helped by the one-size-fits-all approach that is typical in so many schools. Rather, we need teachers who are trained to use a toolbox of principals that they can apply to different types of children.

—Maryanne Wolf

Father didn't expect us to sew,  
or play with dolls like other girls.  
Instead he gave us the books our mother had written,  
and encouraged us to read.  
He taught us independence is admirable,  
and imagination indispensable.

—Lita Judge

If you read quickly, it will benefit you little. You will be like a bee that merely skims the surface of a flower. Instead, in this new way of reading...you must become as the bee who penetrates into the depths of the flower. You plunge deeply within to remove its deepest nectar.

—Madam Guyon

You should never read just for 'enjoyment.' Read to make yourself smarter! Less judgmental. More apt to understand your friends' insane behavior, or better yet, your own. Pick 'hard books.' Ones you have to concentrate on while reading. And for God's sake, don't let me ever hear you say, 'I can't read fiction. I only have time for the truth.' Fiction is the truth, fool!

—John Waters

Most readers have low standards. All they demand from a book is entertainment.

—Mokokoma  
Mokhonoana

It doesn't matter if you don't understand everything. The important thing is that you keep moving, that you constantly keep reading a little bit more, a little bit more ... And then one day, without even realising it, you'll end up understanding everything.

—Abdellah Taïa

Kids who hate reading inevitably end up being terrible writers.

—Wataru Watari

Reading is dreaming with open eyes.

—Taryn Slenk

It is a good rule, after reading a new book, never to allow yourself another new one till you have read an old one in between. If that is too much for you, you should at least read one old one to every three new ones.

—C. S. Lewis

Great speed in reading is a dubious achievement; it is of value only if what you have to read is not really worth reading. A better formula is this: Every book should be read no more slowly than it deserves, and no more quickly than you can read it with satisfaction and comprehension.

—Mortimer J. Adler

He told me I had too many books, how would I ever read them all! I looked at him for the monkey lunatic I suddenly realized he was, and politely told him it was time for him to go...back to whatever jungle from which he came. How foolish of me to let him into my intellectual sanctuary. A girl like me, who lives for adventure, mindgasms, fairytales and soul stimulation have too many books? Read too much poetry? Pffff!

—Melody Lee

Anyone who had seen me reading would have compared me to a man dying of thirst who was gulping down some fresh, pure water... Lighting my lamp with extraordinary caution, I threw myself hungrily into the reading. An easy eloquence, effortless and animated, carried me from one page to the next without my noticing it. A clock struck off the hours in the silence of the shadows, and I heard nothing. My lamp began to run out of oil and produced only a pale light, but I still read on. I could not even take out time to raise the wick for fear of interrupting my pleasure. How those ideas rushed into my brain! How my intelligence adopted them!

—Louise-Sebastien  
Mercier

Thanks to my reading, I have never been caught flat-footed by any situation, never at a loss for how any problem has been addressed (successfully or unsuccessfully) before. It doesn't give me all the answers, but it lights what is often a dark path ahead.

—James Mattis

The tremendous pleasure that can come from reading Shakespeare, for instance, was spoiled for generations of high school students who were forced to go through *Julius Caesar*, *As You Like It*, or *Hamlet*, scene by scene, looking up all the strange words in a glossary and studying all the scholarly footnotes. As a result, they never really read a Shakespearean play.

—Mortimer J. Adler

They sit and stare and stare and sit  
Until they're hypnotized by it,  
Until they're absolutely drunk  
With all that shocking ghastly junk.  
Oh yes, we know it keep them still,  
They don't climb out the window sill,  
They never fight or kick or punch,  
They leave you free to cook the lunch  
And wash the dishes in the sink—  
But did you ever stop to think,  
To wonder just exactly what  
This does to your beloved tot?  
It rots the senses in the head!  
It kills imagination dead!  
It clogs and clutters up the mind!  
It makes a child so dull and blind  
He can no longer understand  
A fantasy, a fairyland!  
His brain becomes as soft as cheese!  
His powers of thinking rust and freeze!  
He cannot think—he only sees!  
'All right' you'll cry. 'All right' you'll say,  
'But if we take the set away,  
What shall we do to entertain  
Our darling children? Please explain!'  
We'll answer this by asking you,  
'How used they keep themselves contented

Before this monster was invented?  
Have you forgotten? Don't you know?  
We'll say it very loud and slow:  
They... used ... to... read! They'd read and read,  
And read and read, and then proceed  
To read some more, Great Scott! Gadzooks!  
One half their lives was reading books!...  
Oh books, what books they used to know,  
Those children living long ago!  
So please, oh please, we beg, we pray,  
Go throw your TV set away,  
And in its place you can install  
A lovely bookshelf on the wall...  
...They'll now begin to feel the need  
Of having something good to read.  
And once they start—oh boy, oh boy!  
You watch the slowly growing joy  
That fills their hearts. They'll grow so keen  
They'll wonder what they'd ever seen  
In that ridiculous machine,  
That nauseating, foul, unclean,  
Repulsive television screen!  
And later, each and every kid  
Will love you more for what you did.

—Roald Dahl

Nothing will have such an impact and be a better investment than owning, reading, and re-reading books that will change the way you think, write, and speak....The right books over a lifetime will determine if you will lead an average life in oblivion; or if you will live a truly wonderful life worth reading about.

—Chris Erzfeld

A lot of people will go on and live their lives without reading something that challenges them intellectually. They read for pleasure or for the sake of reading as a means to relax, which is fine on a recreational level. The problem arises when they are oblivious to the fact that there are books that would dramatically alter their way of thinking.

—Chris Erzfeld

It is a mistake to read too many good books when quite young. A man once told me that he had read all the books that mattered. Cross-questioned, he appeared to have read a great many, but they seemed to have made only a slight impression. How many had he understood? How many had entered into his mental composition? How many had been hammered on the anvils of his mind and afterwards ranged in an armoury of bright weapons ready to hand? It is a great pity to read a book too soon in life. The first impression is the one that counts....Young people should be careful in their reading, as old people in eating their food. They should not eat too much. They should chew it well.

—Winston S. Churchill

The therapeutic effect of reading was not a new concept to the librarians running the VBC (Victory Book Campaign). In the editorial Warren published on the eve of commencing her tenure as director, she discussed how books could soothe pain, diminish boredom or loneliness, and take the mind on a vacation far from where the body was stationed. Whatever a man's need—a temporary escape, a comforting memory of home, balm for a broken spirit, or an infusion of courage—the librarians running the VBC were dedicated to ensuring that each man found a book to meet it.

—Molly Guptill Manning

I would not be the person I am without the authors who made me what I am—the special ones, the wise ones, sometimes just the ones who got there first. It's not irrelevant, those moments of connection, those places where fiction saves your life. It's the most important thing there is.

—Neil Gaiman

Never make fun of someone if they mispronounce a word. It means they learned it by reading.

—Unknown

People who read are people who dream.

—Pablo Picasso

WHAT I IF TOLD YOU  
YOU READ THE TOP LINE WRONG

—Internet Meme

The more you read, the less you sound foolish when you speak.

—Amit Kalantri



I was a shy girl, but when I read, I was adventurous. Books made me bolder.  
—Roxane Gay

Reading a book is like living a deep and fulfilling life. Watching a movie is like being a paralyzed person: watching others live their lives while you observe from the sidelines.

—Charbel Tadros

I do not think that life has any joy to offer so complete, so soul-filling as that which comes upon the imaginative lad, whose spare time is limited, but who is able to snuggle down into a corner with his book, knowing that the next hour is all his own. And how vivid and fresh it all is!

—Arthur Conan Doyle

Reading exposes us to the experiences and minds of others, makes us challenge our own provinciality, deepens and widens who we are and what we can become.

—Rick Gekoski

She [Elizabeth Cary] having neither brother nor sister, nor other companion of her age, spent her whole time in reading; to which she gave herself so much that she frequently read all night; so as her mother was fain to forbid her servants to let her have candles, which command they turned to their own profit, and let themselves be hired by her to let her have them, selling them to her at half a crown apiece, so was she bent to reading; and she not having money so free, was to owe it them, and in this fashion was she in debt a hundred pound afore she was twelve year old.

—Hermione Lee

[My favorite books] seem to immerse me in another life, but ultimately they immerse me in me; I am looking through the window into another person's home, but it is my face that I see in the reflection.

—Derek Thompson

He made it a rule never to touch a book by any author who had not been dead at least 30 years....It's not that I don't believe in contemporary literature...but I don't want to waste valuable time reading any book that has not had the baptism of time. Life is too short.

—Haruki Murakami

You really will be better off in life if you read a lot.

—Sydney Fauser

There is only one way to read, which is to browse in libraries and bookshops, picking up books that attract you, reading only those, dropping them when they bore you, skipping the parts that drag—and never, never reading anything because you feel you ought, or because it is part of a trend or a movement. Remember that the book which bores you when you are twenty or thirty will open doors for you when you are forty or fifty—and vice versa. Don't read a book out of its right time for you.

—Doris Lessing

Reading is a full contact sport; we crash up against the wave of words with all of our intellectual, imaginative, and emotional resources. What results can sometimes be as much our creation as the novelist's or playwright's.

—Thomas C. Foster

Books have been vastly important in my life—as both a reader and a writer. I've learned that the great gift of literature is that someone else's tale becomes a chapter of your story. And I still feel books are the best art form for making contact with another consciousness, which is why reading a good book by yourself never feels lonely.

—Bob Smith

I thought of all the summer evenings I'd spent sitting in the chairs under the trees beside the trailer, reading books that helped me escape Creek View, at least for a little while. Magical kingdoms, Russian love triangles, and the March sisters couldn't have been further away from the trailer park.

— Heather Demetrios

However much you are enjoying a book, however much you want it never to end, you are always eager for it to end. However much you are enjoying a book you are always flicking to the end, counting to see how many pages are left, looking forward to the time when you can put the book down and have done with it. At the back of our minds, however much we are enjoying a book, we come to the end of it and some little voice is always saying, "Thank Christ for that!"

—Geoff Dyer

Children should learn that reading is pleasure, not just something that teachers make you do in school.

—Beverly Cleary

If you love the backs of cereal boxes or still recall how much you loved the Archie comics, share all that with your child. Ingesting words, like fruit and vegetables, is just plain good for us, no matter where they are coming from.

—Pam Allyn

Before every elementary school classroom had a ‘Drop Everything and Read’ period, before parents and educators agonized more about children being glued to *Call of Duty* or getting sucked into the vortex of the Internet, reading as a childhood activity was not always revered. Maybe it was in some families, in some towns, in some magical places that seemed to exist only in stories, but not where I was. Nobody trotted out the kid who read all the time as someone to be admired like the ones who did tennis and ballet and other feats requiring basic coordination.

While those other kids pursued their after-school activities in earnest, I failed at art, gymnastics, ice skating, soccer, and ballet with a lethal mix of inability, fear and boredom. Coerced into any group endeavor, I wished I could just be home already. Rainy days were a godsend because you could curl up on a sofa without being banished into the outdoors with an ominous ‘Go play outside.’

Well into adulthood, I would chastise myself over not settling on a hobby—knitting or yoga or swing dancing or crosswords—and just reading instead. The default position. Everyone else had a passion; where was mine? How much happier I would have been to know that reading was itself a passion. Nobody treated it that way, and it didn’t occur to me to think otherwise.

—Pamela Paul

Don’t let the covers fool you. Books, like lives, are wiggling, evolving, living things. They’re not bound by pages or authors or schools of thought. They’re not born when they’re printed; in fact, they only start to live once they’re read. So first of all, we thank you, reader. You dignify this work we do, and we’re sincerely grateful for your time and attention.

—Kelly G. Wilson

The phrase ‘obligatory reading’ is a contradiction in terms; reading should not be obligatory. Should we ever speak of ‘obligatory pleasure’? Pleasure is not obligatory, pleasure is something we seek. ‘Obligatory happiness’! [...] If a book bores you, leave it; don’t read it because it is famous, don’t read it because it is modern, don’t read a book because it is old. If a book is tedious to you, leave it, even if that book is ‘Paradise Lost’ — which is not tedious to me — or ‘Don Quixote’ — which also is not tedious to me. But if a book is tedious to you, don’t read it; that book was not written for you. Reading should be a form of happiness, so I would advise all possible readers of my last will and testament—which I do not plan to write— I would advise them to read a lot, and not to get intimidated by writers’ reputations, to continue to look for personal happiness, personal enjoyment. It is the only way to read.

—Jorge Luis Borges

A program of active reading and writing might be the hardest form of thinking, but it is also the most organized methodology of self-education. Reading exposes the mind to a world of ideas heretofore unimaginable and encourages the novice learner to write. Reading is a form a joint mediation and writing represents the product of several authors' collective and collaborative minds at work.

—Kilroy J. Oldster

Those who do not read are at the mercy of those who do.

—Shelley A. Ashcroft

You think you are alone until you find books about girls like you. Salvation is certainly among the reasons I read. Reading and writing have always pulled me out of the darkest experiences in my life. Stories have given me place in which to lose myself. They have allowed me to remember. They have allowed me to forget. They have allowed me to imagine different endings and better possible worlds.

—Roxane Gay

I read. That's my form of travel.

—Michael Finkel

Students didn't even read books anymore, thought Arthur. They dispensed with design and layout and cover art and illustrations and reduced reading to nothing but a stream of text in whatever font and size they chose. Reading without books, thought Arthur, was like playing cricket without dressing in white. It could be done, but why?

—Charlie Lovett

Reading is almost always subversive. From the time you read the next night's fairy tale under the covers by flashlight when you have already had your bedtime story from Daddy and are supposed to be asleep to the time you are an adult reading junk, hoping no one catches you at it, reading is private; that's the most seductive thing about it. It's you and the book.

—Phyllis Rose

We should never cease to be readers; pure readers, reading not to learn or for an ulterior motive, but for the joy of reading itself. We should know how to read and ardently desire and to receive, to nourish ourselves, as by delicious food, to grow in wisdom, organically, not to make use of what one reads socially, in polite society; to become human beings who understand the art of reading, that is to become capable of empathy.

—Charles Péguy

The books I read when I was twenty completely changed when I read them when I was sixty.

—Sarah Addison Allen

A book can be a great friend, an advisor, a means to an end. A book reveals so much more than a movie would ever do. For example, when I watched the movie ‘The Hours’ I was fascinated by the story. Just a year later I decided to read the book. And what was my surprise that I was even more dazzled by its writings than I was by the images... The images in my head were more vivid than the film could ever transport me to that feminine universe that the author was trying (and so successfully granted me) to conceive.

—Ana Claudia Antunes

Reading is important. It’s not primarily escapism (though it can be, and there’s nothing wrong with some of that in good measure) and it’s not primarily a way of passing the time. Reading is important to the good life because it stokes the furnaces of our intellect, allows us to expand our understanding of the universe, both inner and outer, for practical gain and simple pleasure. It can induce awe, inspire respect, excite, piss off, and intrigue. These are things that make life worth living.

—Robert Wringham

My mother taught me that reading is a kind of work, and that every paragraph merits exertion, and in this way, I learned how to absorb difficult books.

—Hope Jahren

‘Why do the English not read their own great literature?’

‘Because at school they are made to hate it.’

—Olaf Stapledon

One hour a day withdrawn from frivolous pursuits and profitably employed would enable any man of ordinary capacity to master a complete science. One hour a day would in ten years make an ignorant man a well-informed man...In an hour a day, a boy or girl could read twenty pages thoughtfully—over seven thousand pages, or eighteen large volumes in a year. An hour a day might make all the difference between bare existence and useful, happy living. An hour a day might make—nay, has made—an unknown man a famous one, a useless man a benefactor to his race.

—Orison Swett Marden

Phrases are pebbles that the writer tosses into the reader’s soul. The diameter of the concentric waves they displace depends on the dimensions of the pond.

—Nicolás Gómez Dávila

I love people that read. I think it screams humility. When someone reads, they are essentially admitting they want more, that the world is not enough for them. They want more knowledge, more experience. Whatever this life is, they want more of it.

—Nicholas Browne

I loved college... I knew exactly why I was there and what I wanted to get out of it. I wished I could take every course in the curriculum and read every book in the library. Sometimes after I finished a particularly good book, I had the urge to get the library card, find out who else had read the book, and track them down to talk about it.

—Jeanette Walls

Lady Harman had acquired the habit of reading and the habit of thinking over what she read, and from that it is an easy step to thinking over oneself and the circumstances of one's own life. The one thing trains for the other.

—H. G. Wells

When we read with a child, we are doing so much more than teaching him to read or instilling in her a love of language. We are doing something that I believe is just as powerful, and it is something that we are losing as a culture: by reading with a child, we are teaching that child to be human. When we open a book, and share our voice and imagination with a child, that child learns to see the world through someone else's eyes.

—Anna Dewdney

It was always after reading tales such as these that she wondered how on earth it was that some young ladies did not read at all, or declared they had no interest in it. Didn't they know how you could feel so much from a book? Didn't they know how your heart could race and break from words on a page? Had they never read something so wonderful and horrible that they felt as though the very world should stop and pause to acknowledge the depth of feeling it produced?

—Margaux Gillis

Reading is weightlifting for the brain.

—Tim Green

If you know how to read, the World of Books is open to you, after all; and if you like to read, you'll read. If you don't, you'll forget whatever anybody makes you read, anyway.

—John Crowley

Ah, the deliciousness of discovering a masterwork. My heart begins to lift. I can see myself sitting all day in my chair, immersed in lives, plots, and sentences, intoxicated by words and chimeras, paralyzed by satisfaction and contentment, reading until the deepening twilight, until I can no longer make out the words, until my mind begins to wander, until my aching muscles are no longer able to keep the book aloft. Joy is the anticipation of joy.

—Rabih Alameddine

Because we were Russian, sadness came naturally to us. But so did reading. In my family, a book was a life raft.

—Alice Hoffman

Growing up in the digital age, I'm expected to embrace all forms of modern technology with blissful ignorance. Books were always one of few escapes from this, because reading a book means not having to look at another damned glowing screen—which is why, no matter how 'convenient' or 'enhanced' digital enthusiasts claim that Ebooks are, I'll never see them as real books. They're just files of binary data, and while they might be considered books by a large amount of people, Ebooks have lost the human quality that real books have. You can argue that this is pretentious or stupid or nostalgic, but ultimately what will you pass down to your children and grandchildren? A broken old Kindle device with the same files that millions of other people have, or the dog-eared paperbacks that you fell in love with and wrote your name in and got signed by the author and flipped through in the bookstore and kept with you for years, like an old friend?

—Rebecca McNutt

So let us praise the distinctive pleasures of re-reading: that particular shiver of anticipation as you sink into a beloved, familiar text; the surprise and wonder when a book that had told one tale now turns and tells another; the thrill when a book long closed reveals a new door with which to enter. In our tech-obsessed, speed-obsessed, throw-away culture let us be truly subversive and praise instead the virtues of a long, slow relationship with a printed book unfolding over many years, a relationship that includes its weight in our hands and its dusty presence on our shelves. In an age that prizes novelty, irony, and youth, let us praise familiarity, passion, and knowledge accrued through the passage of time. As we age, as we change, as our lives change around us, we bring different versions of ourselves to each encounter with our most cherished texts. Some books grow better, others wither and fade away, but they never stay static.

—Terri Windling

How wonderful to be read to. To be carried from this world and into another, born away on words.

—Justin Cronin

Why is it these days that so many people hate reading? Some people won't even touch a newspaper or magazine. It isn't television that kills reading, or cinema or radio, or even those accursed little things known as video games. People used to read all the time, but when the century shifted subtly, somewhere along the way, people forgot how to imagine. When did it happen? At what point? Who or what is to blame? Maybe it's just because the world has become so cold and scientific and shallow in recent years.

—Rebecca McNutt

Listening to a podcast, reading a book, listening to an audiobook and watching films isn't a waste of time. It's how somebody becomes wise!

—Deyth Banger

When you come to any passage you don't understand, read it again: if you still don't understand it, read it again: if you fail, even after three readings, very likely your brain is getting a little tired. In that case, put the book away, and take to other occupations, and next day, when you come to it fresh, you will very likely find that it is quite easy.

—Lewis Carroll

School children, who have enjoyed reading a romance or a detective thriller or a novel about terror and conquest, make the invariable mistake of studying literature in the college. They make the mistake of learning theory in place of art; they acquire impediments in their own enjoyment of the books by allowing a set of theories to govern their own reading.

—Anuradha  
Bhattacharyya

I'm thirty years old, but I read at the thirty-four-year-old level.

—Dana Carvey

If we teach a child to read but fail to develop a desire to read, we will have created a skilled nonreader, a literate illiterate. And no high test score will ever undo that damage.

—Kylene Beers



He ate and drank the precious words,  
His spirit grew robust;  
He knew no more that he was poor,  
Nor that his frame was dust.  
He danced along the dingy days,  
And this bequest of wings  
Was but a book. What liberty  
A loosened spirit brings!

—Emily Dickinson

Learning to read well by third grade has been identified as a predictor of high school graduation and career success. Yet 65 percent of American children enter fourth grade unable to read proficiently.

—*Annie E. Casey  
Foundation*

### **A HAPPY BIRTHDAY**

this evening, I sat by an open window  
and read till the light was gone and the book  
was no more than a part of the darkness.  
I could easily have switched on a lamp,  
but I wanted to ride the day down into night,  
to sit alone, and smooth the unreadable page  
with the pale gray ghost of my hand.

—Ted Kooser

There is no app to replace your lap. Read to your kids.

—Eve Allijn

The entertainment value of literature, is, perhaps, the single most important justification for reading. Teachers can provide students with a great deal of pleasure through the judicious selection of quotations that are humorous, that are a clever play on words, or that present a distinctly fresh view of life.

—Dan L. Miller

You must read to your children and you must hug your children and you must love your children. Your success as a family, our success as a society, depends not on what happens in the White House, but on what happens inside your house.

—Barbara Bush

The greatest gift is a passion for reading. It is cheap, it consoles, it distracts, it excites, it gives you knowledge of the world and experience of a wide kind. It is a moral illumination.

— Elizabeth Hardwick

Reading and writing cannot be separated. Reading is breathing in; writing is breathing out.

—Pam Allyn

The greatest and cheapest university—where great teachers abound, the classes are free and there's never any crowding—is just a library card away. Reading...is the best teacher.

—Mary Gordon

Read these three things every night: What you've got to do from this night forward is stuff your head with more different things from various fields . . . I'll give you a program to follow every night, very simple program. For the next thousand nights, before you go to bed every night, read one short story. That'll take you ten minutes, 15 minutes. Okay, then read one poem a night from the vast history of poetry. Stay away from most modern poems. It's crap. It's not poetry! It's not poetry. Now if you want to kid yourself and write lines that look like poems, go ahead and do it, but you'll go nowhere. Read the great poets, go back and read Shakespeare, read Alexander Pope, read Robert Frost. But one poem a night, one short story a night, one essay a night, for the next 1,000 nights. From various fields: archaeology, zoology, biology, all the great philosophers of time, comparing them. Read the essays of Aldous Huxley, read Lauren Easley, great anthropologist. . . I want you to read essays in every field. On politics, analyzing literature, pick your own. But that means that every night then, before you go to bed, you're stuffing your head with one poem, one short story, one essay—at the end of a thousand nights, Jesus God, you'll be full of stuff, won't you?

—Ray Bradbury

Bibliotherapy is reading which gives children greater insight into themselves and helps them grow in appreciation of other people, understanding the world they live in and the forces that operate to make people think, feel, and behave as they do.

—Josette Frank

When the adolescent becomes aware of the fact that his present experiences and anxieties are not unique and that others have had the same impulses and conflicts, he may be better able to handle them. Frequently, literature is the only means by which he can see he is 'normal' and allay guilt and fear thereby.

—Louise Rosenblatt

## **THE BIBLIOTHERAPEUTIC PROCESS:**

Identification with characters, situations, or elements of the story is the first step in this process. Identification helps the reader realize that he is not the first person to encounter a particular problem, and it enables him to vicariously relive a particular experience. Thus, the reader is able to view this problem from a different perspective, which promotes personality adjustment and growth.

The second step is catharsis, or the release of tension. We suggest that the reader gratifies his impulses or desires (even the socially unacceptable drives) by his identification with the actions of the story characters. This gratification results in tension reduction and overall relaxation (catharsis).

Insight is the final phase. By achieving insight the reader understands, modifies, and changes his attitudes and behaviors. Bibliotherapeutic intervention's goal is to gain insight, and it is the responsibility of the teacher to guide students toward it.

—Ronald S. Lenkowsky  
& Barbara E.  
Lenkowsky

One can talk of a book more readily than one can of his own problems without the embarrassment of explicit self revelation...literature may contribute to one's understanding of his own emotional responses to a person or situation by starting an inner readjustment which will modify his response to the next person or situation encountered.

—Joseph S. Zaccaria,  
Harold  
Alton Moses, &  
Jeff S. Hollowell

## **BIBLIOTHERAPY CAN HELP A CHILD:**

- Verbalize problems.
- Get personal insight.
- Acquire accurate information.
- Reduce sense of isolation.
- Think about and discuss problems with greater objectivity.
- Weigh values, beliefs, and reorient life goals.
- Assess personal limitations and assets.
- Enlarge interests.
- Prevent problems from occurring.

—R. Vance Peavy

Since we know that many books have in many different ways changed the thinking of the world, we can easily believe that many an individual can and does have his life changed directly through the experience of reading a book.

—Karl Menninger

Children, like adults, have problems. At times children need help learning to face problems, to see them in and perspective, and to deal with them adequately. Books alone cannot solve these problems, they can help... through bibliotherapy, children may learn to analyze their attitudes and modes of behavior. Books may assist children in comparing their beliefs with those of others. Books may offer many possible solutions to problems or even present the solution that could lessen a child's inner turmoil.

—N. Galen & J. Johns

Learning-disabled adolescents are especially aware of their own feelings of inferiority, failure, and impotence... pupils express empathy for characters, identify with situations they read, and are delighted to discover fictional and factual whose characters experience problems similar or comparable to their own. Reading such stories reinforces their feelings of 'normalcy' and helps the students to realize that they are not alone in facing adolescence's problems and the special problems created by their disabilities.

—Ronald S. Lenkowsky  
& Barbara E.  
Lenkowsky

I never was much on this Book reading, for it takes em too to long to describe the color of the eyes of all the Characters. Then I like my sunsets from eyesight and not from adjectives.

—Will Rogers