

# BEST QUOTES ON BOOKS

A book is made from a tree. It is an assemblage of flat, flexible parts (still called 'leaves') imprinted with dark pigmented squiggles. One glance at it and you hear the voice of another person, perhaps someone dead for thousands of years. Across the millennia, the author is speaking, clearly and silently, inside your head, directly to you. Writing is perhaps the greatest of human inventions, binding together people, citizens of distant epochs, who never knew one another. Books break the shackles of time, proof that humans can work magic.

--Carl Sagan

The experience of reading a fine, old book cannot be duplicated by any electronic media today. A fine, old book appeals to all the senses as one carefully turns and fingers the fragile, yellowed pages; as one unites with the distant past with each whiff of the musty tome; and as the book virtually whispers to the reader with each stiff, crinkly turn of the delicate page.

--Dan L. Miller

Bookmark? You mean quitter strip?

—Unknown

Books are not lumps of lifeless paper but minds alive on the shelves. From each of them goes out its own voice...and just as the touch of a button on your stereo set will fill the room with music, so by taking down one of these volumes, and opening it, one can call into range the voice of a man far distant in time and space, and hear him speaking to us, mind to mind, heart to heart.

--Gilbert Highet

The reading of all good books is like conversation with the finest men of past centuries.

--Descartes

Books are the carriers of civilization. Without books, history is silent, literature dumb, science crippled, thought and speculation at a standstill. Without books, the development of civilization would have been impossible. They are engines of change (as the poet said), windows on the world and lighthouses erected in the sea of time. They are companions, teachers, magicians, bankers of the treasures of the mind. Books are humanity in print.

—Barbara W. Tuchman

The oldest books are still only just out to those who have not read them.

--Samuel Butler

A classic is a book that's stood the test of time, a book that men and women all over the world keep reaching for throughout the ages for its special enlightenment.

--Steve Allen

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

A well-composed book is a magic carpet on which we are wafted to a world that we cannot enter in any other way.

--Caroline Gordon

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

When we buy books we're fooling ourselves into thinking we buy the time to read them.

—Gerard VanDerleun

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

If you close your door to the world of books, the gates of the world of ignorance automatically opens and quickly pulls you inside!

—Mehmet Murat ildan

Books are like seeds. They can lie dormant for centuries and then flower in the most unpromising soil.

—Carl Sagan

‘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

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

If you truly love a book, you should sleep with it, write in it, read aloud from it, and fill its pages with muffin crumbs.

—Anne Fadiman

‘If you take a book with you on a journey,’ Mo had said when she put the first one in her box, ‘an odd thing happens: The book begins collecting your memories. And forever after you have only to open that book to be back where you first read it. It will all come into your mind with the very first words: the sights you saw in that place, what it smelled like, the ice cream you ate while you were reading it... yes, books are like flypaper—memories cling to the printed page better than anything else.’

—Cornelia Funke

Be careful about reading health books. Some fine day you’ll die of a misprint.

—Markus Herz

I take a book with me everywhere I go, and find there are all sorts of opportunities to dip in. The trick is to teach yourself to read in small sips as well as in long swallows. Waiting rooms were made for books—of course! But so are theater lobbies before the show, long and boring checkout lines, and everyone’s favorite, the john. You can even read while you’re driving, thanks to the audiobook revolution.

—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

I'm a bookaholic on the road to recovery. Just kidding. I'm on the road to the bookstore.

—[someecards.com](http://someecards.com)

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

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

--Groucho Marx

A dose of poison can do its work but once, but a bad book can go on poisoning minds for generations.

--W. John Murray

A book is like a man—clever and dull, brave and cowardly, beautiful and ugly. For every flowering thought there will be a page like a wet and mangy mongrel.

--John Steinbeck

A big leather-bound volume makes an ideal razorstrap. A thin book is useful to stick under a table with a broken caster to steady it. A large, flat atlas can be used to cover a window with a broken pane. And a thick, old-fashioned heavy book with a clasp is the finest thing in the world to throw at a noisy cat.

--Mark Twain

There is a space on everyone's bookshelves for books one has outgrown but cannot give away. They hold one's youth between their leaves, like flowers pressed on a half-forgotten summer's day.

--Marion C. Garretty

I could open any book, and I could be anything. I could be anywhere. I could be anyone. My friends, I read myself out of poverty long before I worked myself out of poverty.

--Walter Anderson

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

I went to a bookstore and asked the saleswoman, 'Where's the self-help section?' She said if she told me, it would defeat the purpose.

—George Carlin

Book love, my friends, is your pass to the greatest, the purest, and the most perfect pleasure that God has prepared for His creatures. It lasts when all other pleasures fade. It will support you when all other recreations are gone. It will last you until your death. It will make your hours pleasant to you as long as you live.

--Anthony Trollope

Truly each new book is as a ship that bears us away from the fixity of our limitations into the movement and splendor of life's infinite ocean.

--Helen Keller

Without books God is silent, justice dumb, natural science at a stand, philosophy lame, letters dumb, and all things involved in Cimmerian darkness.

--Thomas Bartholin

Until one has some kind of professional relationship with books, one does not discover how bad the majority of them are.

--George Orwell

To sit alone in the lamplight with a book spread out before you, and hold intimate converse with men of unseen generations—such is a pleasure beyond compare.

--Yoshida Kenko

If I read a book that impresses me, I have to take myself firmly in hand, before I mix with other people; otherwise they would think my mind rather queer.

--Anne Frank

One always tends to overpraise a long book, because one has got through it.

--E. M. Forster

I defy anyone to deny that one of the purposes of books is to provide diversion, to allow readers the opportunity to escape reality for a while—to ignore the discomfort of a subway ride or the fearful wait in the dentist's office or the boring hour between planes.

--Mary Q. Steele

Every book that creates a world you haven't known before enhances your life.

--Judith Krantz

A sudden frost may cause a gardener to cringe....Books are far safer objects of life-long devotion. A book is not subject to the destructive fury of a sudden bad change in the weather. It does not have to be sprayed, fertilized, and pruned at regular intervals....It can be devoured by its owners but is ordinarily safe against rabbits, aphids, and leaf-cutting ants. It is the cake you can eat and still have. If sturdily bound, it may last a lifetime even with frequent use. It can be handled lovingly and thoroughly enjoyed at any hour of the day or night and in every season of the year. A good book never cloy. A great book gives increasing pleasure every time it is opened.

--John Kieran

Most books, like their authors, are born to die; of only a few books can it be said that death hath no dominion over them; they live, and their influence lives forever.

--William Styron

Except a living man there is nothing more wonderful than a book! A message to us from the dead,—from human souls whom we never saw, who lived perhaps thousands of miles away; and yet these, on those little sheets of paper, speak to us, teach us, comfort us, open their hearts to us as brothers.

--Charles Kingsley

To gain glory by books you must not only possess them but know them; their lodgings must be in your brain and not on your book-shelf.

--Charles Isaac Elton

It is chiefly through books that we enjoy intercourse with superior minds....God be thanked for books. They are the voices of the distant and the dead, and make us heirs of the spiritual life of past ages. Books are true levelers. They give us all, who will faithfully use them, the society, the spiritual presence, of the best and greatest of our race.

--William Ellery  
Channing

A book is like a garden carried in the pocket.

--Chinese Proverb

Books are embalmed minds.

--Christian Nestell Bovee

The walls of books around him, dense with the past, formed a kind of insulation against the present world and its disasters.

--Ross MacDonald

There is more treasure in books than in all the pirates' loot on Treasure Island...and best of all, you can enjoy these riches every day of your life.

--Walt Disney

I wonder whether what we are publishing now is worth cutting down trees to make paper for the stuff.

--Richard Brautigan

The things I want to know are in books; my best friend is the man who'll get me a book I ain't read.

--Abraham Lincoln

A book is the only place in which you can examine a fragile thought without breaking it, or explore an explosive idea without fear it will go off in your face...It is one of the few havens remaining where a man's mind can get both provocation and privacy.

--Edward P. Morgan

Never lend books, for no one ever returns them; the only books I have in my library are books that other folk have lent me.

--Anatole France

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

Book love...is your pass to the greatest, the purest, and the most perfect pleasure that God has prepared for His creatures.

--Anthony Trollope

A room without books is as a body without a soul.

--Cicero

Next to acquiring good friends, the best acquisition is that of good books.

--Charles Caleb Colton

Books are the quietest and most constant of friends; they are the most accessible and wisest of counselors, and the most patient of teachers.

--Charles W. Eliot

I love to lose myself in other men's minds...Books think for me.

--Charles Lamb

Medicine for the soul.

--*Library at Thebes*

When we are collecting books, we are collecting happiness.

--Vincent Starrett

Books, the children of the brain.

--Jonathan Swift

A man is known by the company his mind keeps.

--Thomas Bailey Aldrich

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



When you reread a classic you do not see more in the book than you did before; you see more in you than was there before.

--Clifton Fadiman

Until it is kindled by a spirit as flamingly alive as the one which gave it birth a book is dead to us.

--Henry Miller

A book is a part of life, a manifestation of life, just as a tree or a horse or a star. It obeys its own rhythms, its own laws, whether it be a novel, a play, or a diary. The deep, hidden rhythm of life is always there—that of the pulse, the heart beat.

--Henry Miller

Finishing a good book is like leaving a good friend.

--William Feather

The power to give oneself up graciously to a book is the wealthiest habit, I imagine, that one can acquire.

--Chauncey Wright

Every book is like a purge; at the end of it one is empty...like a dry shell on the beach, waiting for the tide to come in again.

--Daphne Du Maurier

Books may well be the only true magic.

—Alice Hoffman

All that Mankind has done, thought, gained or been: it is lying as in magic preservation in the pages of Books. They are the chosen possession of men.

--Thomas Carlyle

A book is the only immortality.

--Rufus Choate

It is with the reading of books the same as with looking at pictures; one must, without doubt, without hesitations, with assurance, admire what is beautiful.

—Vincent van Gogh

It is a man's duty to have books...a library is not a luxury, but one of the necessities of life.

--H. W. Beecher

Books support us in solitude, and keep us from being a burden to ourselves.

--Jeremy Collier

In the highest civilization the book is still the highest delight.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

Books are the windows through which the soul looks out.

--H. W. Beecher

The great and good do not die even in this world. Embalmed in books, their spirits walk abroad. The book is a living voice. It is an intellect to which one still listens.

--Samuel Smiles

There is no Past, so long as Books shall live!

--Bulwer-Lytton

A book is a work of art; it exists for its own sake. The purpose of art is to make a gift that someone else finds of value.

--Kurt Vonnegut

O for a book and a shady nook,  
Either in door or out;  
With the green leaves whispering overhead,  
Or the street cries all about,  
Where I may read all at my ease,  
Both of the new and old;  
For a jolly good book whereon to look,  
Is better to me than gold.

--John Wilson

A good book is the best of friends, the same today and for ever.

--Martin Tupper

A classic is something that everyone wants to have read and nobody wants to read.

--Mark Twain

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

Camerado, this is no book,  
Who touches this touches a man.

--Walt Whitman

Literature is my Utopia. Here I am not disfranchised. 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

Books are a guide in youth and an entertainment for age.

--Jeremy Collier

Old age is a good advertisement.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

To desire to have many books, and never to use them, is like a child that will have a candle burning by him all the while he is sleeping.

--Henry Peacham

Nature and books belong to the eyes that see them.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

Books are good enough in their own way, but they are a mighty bloodless substitute for life.

--Robert Louis Stevenson

You can cover a great deal of country in books

--Andrew Lang

I cannot live without books.

--Thomas Jefferson

We shouldn't teach great books; we should teach a love of reading.

--B. F. Skinner

Books are the legacies that a great genius leaves to mankind, which are delivered down from generation to generation, as presents to the posterity of those who are yet unborn.

--Joseph Addison

All books are divisible into two classes: the books of the hour, and the books of all time.

--John Ruskin

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

--John Ruskin

It is a great thing to start life with a small number of really good books which are your very own.

--Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

The love of learning, the sequestered nooks,  
And all the sweet serenity of books.

--Henry Wadsworth  
Longfellow

Laws die, Books never.

--Bulwer-Lytton

All the known world, excepting only savage nations, is governed by books.

--Voltaire

Our nation was founded, and our constitution was written, by men who got their learning from reading books.

--Dr. E. G. Trotzig

A book is the product of mind and yearning, spread patiently across long centuries. It is the sign and symbol of man's culture and understanding. It presents the loss of good thinking and it expands man's highest moments into permanency. It is the carrier and distributor of the germinations of the mind. It will not permit noble missions to wither. It breathes vitality into the past and brightens the eyes that search the future.

--Editorial, *Peabody  
Journal of  
Education*

Where is human nature so weak as in the book-store?

--H. W. Beecher

There are books of which the backs and covers are by far the best parts.

--Charles Dickens

Man builds no structure which outlives a book.

--E. F. Ware

If we encounter a man of rare intellect, we should ask him what books he reads.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

There is no book so bad but something valuable may be derived from it.

--Pliny

When a book raises your spirits, and inspires you with noble...thoughts, seek for no other test of its excellence.

--La Bruyere

The book is man's best invention so far.

--Carolina Maria  
De Jesus

You think your pains and your heartbreaks 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, or who have ever been alive.

--James Baldwin

Never judge a book by its movie.

—J. W. Eagan

Everything comes to him who waits but a loaned book.

--Frank McKinney  
Hubbard

A classic is a book that doesn't have to be rewritten.

--Carl Van Doren

There is no Frigate like a Book  
To take us Lands away  
Nor any Coursers like a Page  
Of prancing Poetry—  
This Traverse may the poorest take  
Without oppress of Toll—  
How frugal is the Chariot  
That bears the Human Soul.

--Emily Dickinson

Long ago I discovered the value of books. Every prison has a library, and prison wardens, knowing that you can't file through steel bars with a copy of Tom Sawyer, gladly let you have all the books you want. I've been reading for 30 years; I've given myself a pretty fair education, good enough to enable me to appreciate decent literature. Reading? Everyone has a crutch of some sort to lean on. With some it's whiskey or drugs. There are luckier ones who have the crutch of real faith to hold them up when they start to sag. My crutch? Books.

I'll spend the rest of my life reading, and because I'd rather read than do anything else, I don't look forward to years of hopeless, black despair. Most men who are in for life are filled with bitterness and hatred for the unkind fate that led them to such a horrible end. My reading has given me the ability to judge my life, my actions and my present situation with a considerable degree of detachment. I can't repeat often enough that there is not a soul in the world I can blame for what happened to me.

--Quentin Reynolds

Great books not only record and interpret life for us but also console our griefs, expose our vices, redeem our weaknesses.

--Dayton Kohler

Books teach us how to live more completely within ourselves.

--Dayton Kohler

Books that change our lives are the ones that make us recognize ourselves.

--Eugene Kennedy

A picture book should be a bridge between two laps—the adult's and the child's—half of the book open on each.

--Steven Kellogg

Computers will soon replace books, they say.  
I don't like to be a disputer,  
But who ever heard of spending the night  
Curled up with a good computer?

--Sally Palmer

It is books that teach us to refine on our pleasures when young: and which: having  
taught us: enable us to recall them with satisfaction when old.

--Leigh Hunt

Of all the inanimate objects, of all men's creations, books are nearest to us, for they  
contain our very thought, our ambitions, our indignations, our illusions, our fidelity  
to truth, and our persistent leaning towards error. But most of all they resemble us  
in their precarious hold on life.

--Joseph Conrad

A classic is a book that gives you that exhilarating feeling, if only for a moment,  
that you've finally uncovered part of the meaning of life.

--Steve Allen

Classics open up your mind. Classics help you grow. Classics help you understand  
your life, your world, yourself.

--Steve Allen

We should learn at the outset to distrust the book whose chief recommendation is  
its popularity. Public favor is too fickle to mark any book for survival, as the forgot-  
ten, unread titles on the best seller lists of the last fifty years will show.

--Dayton Kohler

Books make vivid the problems of human relations and give access to them in new  
dimensions.

--Margaret Heaton

Books can play a unique role in fostering better human relationships among all  
people.

--Jesse Perry

A large still book is a piece of quietness, succulent and nourishing in a noisy world.

--Holbrook Jackson

The proper study of mankind is books.

--Aldous Huxley

Without having acquired the power of reading for pleasure, none of us can be independent.

--Viscount Grey

We profit little by books we do not enjoy.

--Sir John Lubbock

Books are like mirrors; if a monkey peeps into one, you can't expect an angel to be reflected.

--Georg Christoph  
Lichtenberg

He who would learn without a book is like the man who tries to draw water with a sieve.

--*Medieval School Poem*

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

--John Harington

To me the charm of an encyclopedia is that it knows—and I needn't.

--Francis Yeats-Brown

There are perhaps no days of our childhood we lived so fully as those we believe we left without having lived them: those we spent with a favourite book.

--Marcel Proust

There are still a few of us booklovers around despite the awful warnings of Marshall McLuhan with his TV era and his pending farewell to Gutenberg.

--Frank Davies

Deep-versed in books  
And shallow in himself.

--John Milton

Learn to love good books. There are treasures in books that all the money of the world cannot buy, but that the poorest laborer can have for nothing.

--Robert G. Ingersoll



To turn over the pages of a book long coveted, to handle an unexpected find, to fondle a binding, to dust the edges, are exquisite joys in which the hand shares with the eye.

--Octave Uzanne

Books are the best of things, well used; abused, among the worst.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

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 A. Menninger

A book is a machine to think with.

--I. A. Richards

Pick your books as you would your friends. Have Emerson in your home. Ever see a movie that was a bit over your head? Well—it was because you haven't read enough.

--Fiorello H. La Guardia

Wear the old coat and buy the new book.

--Austin Phelps

Don't join the book burners. Don't think you're going to conceal faults by concealing evidence that they never existed. Don't be afraid to go in your library and read every book.

--Dwight D. Eisenhower

That is a good book which is opened with expectation and closed with profit.

--Bronson Alcott

Books without the knowledge of life are useless.

--Samuel Johnson

If I were blind, I would still take pleasure in holding a beautiful book.

--Sylvestre de Sacy

Every book that we take up without a purpose is an opportunity lost of taking up a book with a purpose.

--Frederic Harrison

The book-lover needs most to be reminded that man's business here is to know for the sake of living, not to live for the sake of knowing.

--Frederic Harrison

Read Homer once, and you can read no more;  
For all books else appear so mean, so poor:  
Verse will seem prose, but still persist to read,  
And Homer will be all the books you need.

--John Sheffield

Whole eras are changed by books, even the manners and behaviour of those who cannot read.

--Holbrook Jackson

It is, however, with books as with men: a very small number play a great part.

--Voltaire

Everywhere I have sought peace and not found it, except in a corner with a book.

--Thomas à Kempis

The companionship of books is unquestionably one of the greatest antidotes to the ravages of time, and study is better than all medical formulas for the prolongation of life.

--William Roberts

Many times the reading of a book has made the fortune of a man, has decided his way of life.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

Good books, like good friends, are few and chosen; the more select the more enjoyable.

—Louisa May Alcott

To the collector, books are treasures to be protected, to the bibliophile books are friends to be enjoyed.

--Holbrook Jackson

There is nothing more fit to be looked at than the outside of a book.

--Thomas Love Peacock

The credit of ancient literature, the certainty of history, and the truth of religion, are all involved in the secure transmission of ancient books to modern times.

--Isaac Taylor

You should never dust books until the rare hour arrives when you want to read a particular volume; then warily approach it with a snow-white napkin, take it down from its shelf, and, withdrawing to some back apartment, proceed to cleanse the tome.

--Augustine Birrell

Some love horses, or hawks, or hounds, but I from my boyhood have pined with a desire for books.

--Emperor Julian

Own all the books you can, use all the books you own, and as many more as you can get.

--William Roberts

The one best and sufficient reason for a man to buy a book is because he thinks he will be happier with it than without it.

--A. E. Newton

When I want a book, it is as a tiger wants a sheep. I must have it with one spring, and, if I miss it, go away defeated and hungry.

--Oliver Wendell Holmes

I have known men to hazard their fortunes, go long journeys half-way about the world, forget friendship, even lie, cheat, and steal, all for the gain of a book.

--A. S. W. Rosenbach

Gold, silver, jewels, purple raiment, fine houses, broad acres, paintings, caparisoned steeds, afford a dumb and superficial pleasure; books delight us to the marrow.

--E. H. R. Tatham

Some people wouldn't read a book even if it were banned.

--Laurence J. Peter

The books that the world calls immoral are the books that show the world its own shame.

--Oscar Wilde

There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. Books are well written or badly written.

--Oscar Wilde

Books serve to show a man that those original thoughts of his aren't very new after all.

--Abraham Lincoln

He that loveth a book, will never want a faithful friend, a wholesome counselor, a cheerful companion, an effectual comforter.

--Isaac Barrow

A book is a garden, an orchard, a storehouse, a party, a company by the way, a counselor, a multitude of counselors.

--Charles Baudelaire

Books are the compasses and telescopes and sextants and charts which other men have prepared to help us navigate the dangerous seas of human life.

--Jesse Lee Bennett

Books are men of higher stature,  
And the only men that speak aloud for future times to hear.

--Elizabeth Barrett  
Browning

No man can be called friendless who had God and the companionship of good books.

--Elizabeth Barrett  
Browning

When a book raises your spirit and inspires you with noble and manly thoughts, seek for no other test of its excellence. It is good and made by a good workman.

--Jean de la Bruyere

The assembled souls of all men held wise, imprisoned until some one takes them down from a shelf and reads them.

--Samuel Butler the  
Younger

Of all the things which man can do or make here below, by far the most momentous, wonderful, and worthy are the things we call books.

--Thomas Carlyle

There are men that will make you books, and turn them loose into the world, with as much dispatch as they would do a dish of fritters.

--Cervantes

Books are the food of youth, the delight of old age; the ornament of prosperity, the refuge and comfort of adversity; a delight at home, and no hindrance abroad; companions by night, in traveling, in the country.

--Cicero

Books should to one of these four ends conduce:  
For wisdom, piety, delight or use.

--Sir John Denham

Consider what you have in the smallest chosen library. A company of the wisest and wittiest men that could be picked out of all civil countries, in a 1000 years, have set in best order the results of their learning and wisdom. The men themselves were hid and inaccessible, solitary, impatient of interruption, fenced by etiquette; but the thought which they did not uncover to their bosom friend is here written out in transparent words to us, the strangers of another age.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Until we have discovered that certain books grow with our maturing experience and other books do not, we have not learned how to distinguish a great book from a book.

--John Erskine

If the crowns of all the kingdoms of Europe were laid down at my feet in exchange for my books and my love of reading, I would spurn them all.

--Fenelon

A thousand years hence they are what you find them today, speaking the same words, holding forth the same comfort.

--Eugene Field

Something very significant has happened to a man when he realizes that in books the greatest souls of the world will come to call on him as though there were no one else on earth whom they had to call upon.

--Harry Emerson Fosdick

Why, except for some special reason, read an inferior book, at the very time you might be reading one of the highest order?

--John Foster

Books make up no small part of human happiness.

--Frederick the Great

Formal education applies its patterns to the mind; but only through books does the mind itself enrich, deepen, apply, modify, and develop those patterns in individual life fulfillment.

--Helen E. Haines

If I have not read a book before, it is, to all intents and purposes, new to me, whether it was printed yesterday or three hundred years ago.

--William C. Hazlitt

Old books, as you well know, are books of the world's youth, and new books are fruits of its age.

--Oliver Wendell  
Holmes, Sr.

The best of a book is not the thought which it contains, but the thought which it suggests; just as the charm of music dwells not in the tones but in the echoes of our hearts.

--Oliver Wendell Holmes

A blessed companion is a book,—a book that, fitly chosen, is a lifelong friend,...a book that, at a touch, pours its heart into our own.

--Douglas Jerrold

As good almost kill a man as kill a good book; who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God's image; but he who destroys a good book kills reason itself.

--John Milton

I have friends whose society is delightful to me; they are persons of all countries and of all ages; distinguished in war, in council, and in letters; easy to live with, always at my command.

--Petrarch

Books are like the windows of a great tower. They let light in.

--William L. Stidger

Let your bookcases and your shelves be your gardens and your pleasure-grounds.  
Pluck the fruit that grows therein, gather the roses, the spices, and the myrrh.

--Judah Ibn Tibbon

Books are lighthouses erected in the great sea of time.

--E. P. Whipple

There is not enough story in the books written today. When you come on a book that has real narrative drive--which tells an exciting story—you have, in the novel field, a best seller, such as *The Caine Mutiny* or *Gone with the Wind*.

--Roger Garis

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

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

Books are special...because they are not a mass medium. They speak to one...here and to another there; they don't force themselves on you; they're waiting for you if you want them. And books are special because they're an open medium, not a package deal like movies or television. You bring your own imagination to a book; you complete it yourself; you take from it what you need.

--John Rowe Townsend

It is immensely worthwhile to introduce children to books, but you should not try to influence them; except, perhaps, gently and tentatively, by leading them always in the direction of books that will give them more, will give them a richer and deeper and more rewarding experience.

--John Rowe Townsend

A book may be offensive not because it is unsavory but because it is unredeemed by an artistic vision.

--Ralph Ellison

I would like to see a time when children's books were not segregated from adult books, a time when people didn't think of children's books as a minor art form, a little Peterpanville, a cutesy-darling place where you could Have Fun, Laugh Your Head Off.

--Maurice Sendak

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

As we move into an age of mass communication, we move also into an age of mass-produced minds—look-alike mentalities. People are processed by television programs carpentered for the lowest common denominator, and television's estimate of the lowest common denominator is low indeed....

It is here that the reading of books—the library as the place in which books are read--becomes important as it has never been before. It is in books and by means of books that an escape from the sameness and suffocation of television and the other mass media is possible. In a book you touch not a generalized, universalized opinion which is standardized orthodoxy for the moment, but a man at the most living moment of his life—the moment when he is struggling with those aspects of his human experience which have moved him most, puzzled him most—those aspects which define him as a man, as a self different from other selves.

--Archibald MacLeish

Keeping history off the dusty shelf of dull, irrelevant facts is one of the jobs that children's books do admirably. Even when the story is only made for dreaming, history seeps in around the edges to make the past an experience instead of an exercise.

--*Christian Science  
Monitor*

Novelty is only an arresting factor; originality is the quality which gives a book endurance.

--Irene Hunt



If you can read without anything distracting you from what I write, gradually you will feel that I inhabit you, and you will bring me back to life. You will even risk making, unconsciously, one of my gestures, your face will look like my face. Naturally I am speaking to the youth of a time when I shall no longer be here in flesh and blood, when my blood will be mixed with my ink.

That is the whole difference between a book which is only a book and this book which is a person turned into a book. Turned into a book and calling for help so that the spell can be broken and the person reincarnated in the person of the reader. That is the hocus-pocus I ask of you. Understand me. It is not so difficult as it seems at first.

--Jean Cocteau

Few people ask from books what books can give....If you open your mind as widely as possible, then signs and hints of almost imperceptible fineness, from the twist and turn of the first sentences, will bring you into the presence of a human being unlike any other.

--Virginia Woolf

I think the booklover has an even better life of it than a gardener....

With a good book you plant a way of looking--not just at books but an open way of seeing so that the child is able to look at anything and enjoy it just for itself.

Children are as likely to fasten on to something bad as good. It depends on what is put before them. My kids...would live on lollipops and toffee, but they need a staple diet. If you let a child wander among a whole lot of rubbish he will choose rubbish. You must let him wander among good books and choose between the good...and the good.

--Brian Wildsmith

Originality...is that special blend of color and contrast, that quality of vigor or poetic mood, that depth of characterization with which the writer presents his story. His plot may be time-worn--or he may have no plot at all—simply a segment of life which may span a day, a week, a year, a lifetime. Often the stark resume of such a story may leave the reader cold. It sounds ‘old hat’—something that has been done many times, an idea hoary with age. Yet, that book may have the quality of originality—the insight into character and behavior, the intensity of mood, the grace of narration, the beauty of diction—which one writer has contributed to an idea, giving us a book that stands like a giant among others which have employed the same idea.

--Irene Hunt

Children's books are surely among the most important books that can be published. The impressions a child receives from them are often intense and lasting. Unlike an adult reader, he comes to the book with no preconceived ideas. What do the critics say? Is it on an approved reading list? Is it relevant? He does not care. It is enough for him to be able to read it, one to one, privately.

--B. J. Chute

Facts never become obsolete or stale. Commentaries always become obsolete and stale. When a writer tries to explain too much, to psychologize, he's already out of date when he begins. If Homer had tried to explain the deeds of his heroes according to the old Greek philosophy or psychology of his time, if such a thing existed—it really didn't exist—nobody could read Homer any more. Homer just gave us the images and the facts, and because of this, the 'Iliad' and the 'Odyssey' are fresh in our times.

--Isaac Bashevis Singer

All books are mysteries. At their best, they pose questions and then work the readers through to the answers.

--Gregory Mcdonald

The book as a whole sees the mind and the world as inextricably fitted twin puzzles. The mind fits the world and shapes it as a river fits and shapes its own banks.

--Annie Dillard

A book is not a book until it is read. There must be a reader as well as a writer to complete the mysterious process of creation.

--Monica Dickens

Books haven't been made obsolete by the computer or television, or movies, or any other competitive medium. They offer active rather than passive experience, an opportunity for imagination to enter an alliance with that of the writer.

--Robert Kirsch

My concern with children...is that they find in a book what they had never quite expected to see in print—elements of themselves, dreams they're not sure but what they too may have dreamed. And a chance...to play with their imagination. To stretch it and bend it and peer through and around it and make whatever connections are natural between the book and themselves, the life in the book and the life outside.

--Nat Hentoff

Who is to determine the excellent book, you or the young man so enthralled by Tarzan, Lord of the Jungle? This is the bothersome thing about excellence. I am sure that it exists, but it is certainly a mercurial thing. It is not simply that excellence invites elitism—which it certainly does—it also invites arguments, quarrels, fist fights, murder, and mayhem. An excellent book remains a very elusive concept, for the idea encompasses a book, its purposes, how well it succeeds in its aims—and in whose judgment.

--Mary Q. Steele

It is interesting to speculate as to why novels were chosen as the only best sellers in the late nineteenth-and early twentieth-century years. Perhaps frivolous romances were more salable—their prices were low at that time. There undoubtedly was an audience for serious nonfiction, but its price was appreciably higher than that of light fiction. Today the nonfiction best sellers outsell the novels by two to one.

—Alice Payne Hackett

The private bookshelves of the world must contain thousands of miles of unloved and unread books occupying space required by a living literature. Once, when crossing the Atlantic, I watched an old lady sitting by the rails of the Queen Elizabeth's promenade deck, engrossed in a paperback. As she completed each page her hand, with great economy of gesture, ripped it away, screwed it up and threw it into the waters of the ocean. She had the right idea.

--Sir Robert Lusty

While some reviewers use the expression 'page-turner' to recommend a book, I think the word has just the opposite connotation. An eagerness to turn the page suggests that there is nothing on it to hold you. Yet the more I like a book, the more reluctant I am to turn the page. Lovers, even book lovers, tend to cling. No one-night stands or 'reads' for them.

There are things in a good book that can't be hurried. You have to surrender yourself to them, and surrender is a slow process. When a good, complex sentence seizes you in its rhythms, when it beats against you like a Jacuzzi whirlpool, the last thing you want to do is to move on....To hurry through the rise and fall of a fine full sentence is like defying the role of time in human life.

--Anatole Broyard

There is no Past, so long as Books shall live!

--Bulwer-Lytton

The harmonies of bound books are like the flowers of the field.

--Hilaire Belloc

The book of the moment often has immense vogue, while the book of the age, which comes in its company from the press, lies unnoticed; but the great book has its revenge. It lives to see its contemporary pushed up shelf by shelf until it finds its final resting place in the garret or the auction room.

--Hamilton Wright Mabie

What really knocks me out is a book that, when you're all done reading it, you wish the author that wrote it was a terrific friend of yours and you could call him up on the phone whenever you felt like it.

--J. D. Salinger

If you could build a small package, something small enough to carry in your coat pocket, a machine which would instantly start and stop, in which you could instantly reverse yourself or go forward, which would require no batteries or other energy sources, and which would provide you with full information on an entire civilization, what would you have? A book.

--Isaac Asimov

I would dare say that *Walden* and *Huckleberry Finn* are the two books that reflect most deeply and most clearly the basic tensions involved in being an American.

--Clifton Fadiman

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

Only one hour in the normal day is more pleasurable than the hour spent in bed with a book before going to sleep, and that is the hour spent in bed with a book after being called in the morning.

--Rose Macaulay

There is, I fancy, a kind of book which certainly influences the world directly, and, it may be truly said, is an original cause to the effect it creates. It is not the book which merely expresses what its audience was already feeling in a confused fashion, nor the book which fires enthusiasm by rhetoric; but the book which tells clearly the discovery of some truth, giving positive evidence for same.

--Hilaire Belloc

When you take up a book you must swallow it at one mouthful. That is the only way to know it in its entirety.

--Gustave Flaubert

A book is a friend; a good book is a good friend. It will talk to you when you want it to talk, and it will keep still when you want it to keep still—and there are not many friends who know enough to do that.

--Lyman Abbott

There are some books one needs maturity to enjoy just as there are books an adult can come on too late to savor.

--Phyllis McGinley

A book is a part of life, a manifestation of life, just as much as a tree or a horse or a star. It obeys its own rhythms, its own laws, whether it be a novel, a play, or a diary. The deep, hidden rhythm of life is always there—that of the pulse, the heart beat.

--Henry Miller

Until it is kindled by a spirit as flamingly alive as the one which gave it birth a book is dead to us.

--Henry Miller

Real bibliophiles do not put their books on shelves for people to look at or handle. They have no desire to show off their darlings, or to amaze people with their possessions. They keep their prized books hidden away in a secret spot to which they resort stealthily, like a Caliph visiting his harem, or a church elder sneaking into a bar. To be a book collector is to combine the worst characteristics of a dope-fiend with those of a miser.

--Robertson Davies

Books are not made for furniture, but there is nothing else that so beautifully furnishes a house.

--Henry Ward Beecher

There is no worse robber than a bad book.

--Italian Proverb

Ideas, when vended in a book, carry with them a kind of dignity and certainty which awe many into implicit belief.

--Bronson Alcott

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 book-printing ceased tomorrow, is enormous.

--George Gissing

Age increases my conviction that one cannot afford to give much time to the classics. Some time, yes. But one needs to enlarge and enrich one's view of life and the universe. The ideas of the classics, so far as living, are our commonplaces. It is the modern books that give us the latest and most profound conceptions. It seems to me rather a lazy makeshift to mumble over the familiar.

--Oliver Wendell  
Holmes, Jr.

It is with books as with men,—it is easiest to acquaint oneself with those least worth knowing.

--John Lancaster  
Spalding

It is evident that to extract the essential soul and flavor of certain books one should endeavor to read them in the exact surroundings in which they were conceived, or in surroundings as nearly similar as may be; for the clear air, the sky, the water are, as it were, mixed with the writer's mind and woven into the very stuff of his imaginings....Herrick should be read in a Devon lane in the time of violets....Rabelais must be read among the rich lands of the Chionnais in Touraine, on the edge of a white road with cornfields and vineyards on either side. But let there be a farmyard near, with a ripe and aromatic muck-heap in it, the scent of which must be borne to you on the wind; and let there be also loud bursts of rustic laughter and a bottle of Chinon.

--D. B. Wyndham Lewis

What single book would one choose to be cast away with on a desert island? My choice would be a *Webster's Unabridged*, that great mother of books, that matrix from which one man delivers *Finnegan's Wake*, another *A Shropshire Lad*. What a glorious prospect—to be alone on an island, with an opportunity to sit back against a banana tree, and read all the way from aardvark to zymurgy!

--Lawrence Clark Powell

I am often uncertain and almost blind where things, events, books, sciences are concerned. I only begin to see their worth, or worthlessness again when I look at the people whom they influence.

--Theodor Haecker

A classic is a book that has never finished saying what it has to say.

--Italo Calvino

Books are...repositories of innumerable riches, from soaring riffs of intellectual grace notes to belly laughs to emotional roller coasters to glimpses of unknown worlds, both psychic and physical.

--Patricia Mulcahy

Somehow books are still supposed to hold onto a kernel of truth and higher meaning that you can't find anywhere else. Somehow the very quaintness of the object—each one different though mass produced, each package custom-made for all these voices, opinions, flights of fantasy—renders it precious in an increasingly high-tech world. Even the average middle-class American family who spends most of their leisure time taping on the VCR, reading People magazine, and engaging in some sort of physical exercise or sport, will want to have a few books around the house, almost like icons from an earlier culture.

--Patricia Mulcahy

In a country lacking spiritual glue, it is still primarily through books that people learn to expand their emotional and intellectual horizons. Everyone knows that movies and TV are highly commercialized industries where you have to compromise to get anything accomplished because of the enormous budgets and production costs. Theater is still a cultural inner sanctum; an excursion to see live drama remains a rarefied experience for the vast majority of Americans. Not so for books—you can find a selection of the world's great literature at the chain store in the shopping mall down the street. Great Expectations may be buried beneath piles of discounted bestsellers, but it's there nonetheless, even if you have to dig a bit to find it.

--Patricia Mulcahy

Every idea, trend, or personality that has any kind of impact in contemporary America will wind up in a book of some sort.

--Patricia Mulcahy

Ideas rule the world and books are the best carriers of ideas.

--George F. Will

Books provide not only role models, they also teach us lessons we never forget about courage, sacrifice, ambition and desire, right and wrong, love and hate, war and peace.

--Michael Korda

Television and print cannot coexist: books are doomed. Television will always overwhelm words with pictures, and will debase such language as it uses.

--George F. Will

Television does not ban books, it simply displaces them.

--Neil Postman

Books that have become classics--books that have had their day and now get more praise than perusal—always remind me of retired colonels and majors and captains who, having reached the age limit, find themselves retired on half pay.

--Thomas Bailey Aldrich

Speak of the moderns without contempt and of the ancients without idolatry; judge them all by their merits, but not by their age.

--Lord Chesterfield

The praise of ancient authors proceeds not from the reverence of the dead, but from the competition and mutual envy of the living.

--Thomas Hobbes

It is only in the country that we can get to know a person or a book.

--Cyril Connolly

Neither is a dictionary a bad book to read. There is no cant in it, no excess of explanation, and it is full of suggestion,—the raw material of possible poems and histories.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

We cannot improve on the classics.

--Jean de La Fontaine

A book that is shut, is but a block.

--Thomas Fuller

To me the charm of an encyclopedia is that it knows—and I needn't.

--Francis Yeats-Brown

It is futile to assign the place an artist is likely to take in the future....Books and pictures read differently to different generations.

--William Rothenstein



I converse only with myself and my books.

--Pliny the Younger

People feel no obligation to buy books. It isn't their fault. Art seems cheap to them, because almost always it is cheap....People stick any kind of stuff together between covers and throw it at them.

--Sherwood Anderson

This will never be a civilized country until we expend more money for books than we do for chewing gum.

--Elbert Hubbard

The fact that a book is in the public library brings no comfort. Books are the one element in which I am personally and nakedly acquisitive. If it weren't for the law I would steal them. If it weren't for my purse I would buy them.

--Harold Laski

The worst thing about new books is that they keep us from reading the old ones.

--Joseph Joubert

A best-seller is the gilded tomb of a mediocre talent.

--Logan Pearsall Smith

Books gave me something to do with my imagination: They filled me with adventures that I could play out for myself, over and over again, casting myself in the role of hero or combining ideas to make new adventures.

--Stephen R. Donaldson

Books are...funny little portable pieces of thought.

--Susan Sontag

I have always come to life after coming to books.

--Jorge Luis Borges

It is more of a job to interpret the interpretations than to interpret the things, and there are more books about books than about any other subject: we do nothing but write glosses about each other.

--Montaigne

Books are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a potency of life in them to be as active as that soul was whose progeny they are; nay they do preserve as in a vial the purest efficacy and extraction of that living intellect that bred them.

--John Milton

A good book is the precious lifeblood of a master spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life.

--John Milton

Books, like proverbs, receive their chief value from the stamp and esteem of ages through which they have passed.

--Sir William Temple

Dictionaries are like watches; the worst is better than none, and the best cannot be expected to go quite true.

--Samuel Johnson

Dreams, books, are each a world; and books, we know,  
Are a substantial world, both pure and good:  
Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,  
Our pastime and our happiness will grow.

--William Wordsworth

Maybe the whole idea of the 'classic,' the book that survives over time, is obsolete; in a society where so much is disposable, why should literature be made to last?

--James Atlas

The publishing industry functions as gatekeepers of ideas insofar as they make decisions about what to 'let in' and what to 'keep out.'

--Lewis Coser, Charles  
Kadushin and  
Walter Powell

There can be no such thing, really, as too many books, only too few readers.

--*The Nation*

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

All the same, they (books) do serve some purpose. Culture doesn't save anything or anyone, it doesn't justify. But it's a product of man: he projects himself into it, he recognizes himself in it; that critical mirror alone offers him his image.

--Jean Paul Sartre

Some books are undeservedly forgotten; none are undeservedly remembered.

--W. H. Auden

It is chiefly through books that we enjoy intercourse with superior minds....God be thanked for books. They are the voices of the distant and the dead, and make us heirs of the spiritual life of past ages. Books are true levelers. They give to all, who will faithfully use them, the society, the spiritual presence, of the best and greatest of our race.

--William Ellery  
Channing

'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

The love of learning, the sequestered nooks,  
And all the sweet serenity of books.

--Henry Wadsworth  
Longfellow

A good book is the best of friends, the same today and forever.

--Martin Farquhar  
Tupper

How many a man has dated a new era in his life from the reading of a book?

--Henry David Thoreau

What a sense of security in an old book which Time has criticized for us!

--James Russell Lowell

The mortality of all inanimate things is terrible to me, but that of books most of all.

--William Dean Howells

There are some books which cannot be adequately reviewed for twenty or thirty years after they come out.

--John, Viscount  
Morley of  
Blackburn

A book, like a person, has its fortunes with one; is lucky or unlucky in the precise moment of its falling in our way, and often by some happy accident counts with us for something more than its independent value.

--Walter Pater

Books have been published for the consolation of the distressed; for the guidance of the wandering; for the relief of the destitute; for the hope of the penitent; for uplifting the burdened soul above its sorrows and fears; for the general amelioration of the condition of all mankind; for the right against wrong; for the good against bad; for the truth. This book is published for two dollars per volume.

--Robert J. Burdette

It is one of the misfortunes of life that one must read thousands of books only to discover that one need not have read them.

--Thomas De Quincey

Books are fatal: they are the curse of the human race. Nine-tenths of existing books are nonsense, and the clever books are the refutation of that nonsense. The greatest misfortune that ever befell man was the invention of printing.

--Benjamin Disraeli

Whether for information, argument or entertainment, the book is considered a repository. One expects that the contents of a book will be available beyond the immediate moment—for days or years or generations into the future.

--Leonard Shatzkin

Books through the ages have earned humanity's high regard as semi-sacred objects.

--Richard Kluger

Without books we might be tempted to believe that our civilization was born yesterday—or when the latest newsmagazine went to press.

--Daniel J. Boorstin

Books are weapons in the war of ideas.

*--Motto of the Council on  
Books in Wartime*

Books differ from all other propaganda media, primarily because one single book can significantly change the reader's attitude and action to an extent unmatched by the impact of any other single medium.

--Unidentified CIA  
Official

Certain books have exerted a profound influence on history, culture, civilization and scientific thought throughout recorded time...In every historical era, we find overwhelming evidence of the power of the written word, without which a high state of civilization and culture is inconceivable in any time or place.

--Robert B. Downs

Books, I found, had the power to make time stand still, retreat or fly into the future.

--Jim Bishop

Clearly, books can be forces for both good and bad...Books are dynamic and powerful instruments, tools and weapons.

--Robert B. Downs

We've got 40,000 books published each year, and 90% of them are swill.

--John Leonard

How little do politics affect the life, the moral life of a nation. One single good book influences the people a vast deal more.

—William Gladstone

Tradition is but a meteor, which, if it once falls, cannot be rekindled. Memory, once interrupted, is not to be recalled. But written learning is a fixed luminary, which, after the cloud that had hidden it has passed away, is again bright in its proper station. So books are faithful repositories, which may be awhile neglected or forgotten, but when opened again, will again impart instruction.

--Samuel Johnson

Books are standing counselors and preachers, always at hand, and always disinterested; having this advantage over oral instructors, that they are ready to repeat their lesson as often as we please.

--Robert Chambers

Books are masters who instruct us without rods or ferrules, without words or anger, without bread or money. If you approach them, they are not asleep; if you seek them, they do not hide; if you blunder, they do not scold; if you are ignorant, they do not laugh at you.

--Richard de Bury

Books are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a certain potency of life in them, to be as active as the soul whose progeny they are; they preserve, as in a vial, the purest efficacy and traction of the living intellect that bred them.

--John Milton

My books kept me from the ring, the dog-pit, the tavern, and the saloon. The associate of Pope and Addison, the mind accustomed to the noble though silent discourse of Shakespeare and Milton, will hardly seek or put up with low or evil company and slaves.

--Thomas Hood

Books are but waste paper unless we spend in action the wisdom we get from thought.

--Edward G.  
Bulwer-Lytton

The silent influence of books, is a mighty power in the world; and there is a joy in reading them known only to those who read them with desire and enthusiasm. Silent, passive, and noiseless though they be, they yet set in action countless multitudes, and change the order of nations.

—Henry Giles

When a new book comes out I read an old one.

—Samuel Rogers

The first time I read an excellent work, it is to me just as if I had gained a new friend; and when I read over a book I have perused before, it resembles the meeting with an old one.

—Oliver Goldsmith

As you grow ready for it, somewhere or other, you will find what is needful for you in a book.

--George Macdonald

The great books are those that grow with man.

--Jean Rostand

He who knows books has four eyes.

--Bulgarian Proverb

There is no worse robber than a bad book.

--Italian Proverb

The real purpose of books is to trap the mind into doing its own thinking.

--Christopher Morley

Why does everyone think a girl who prefers books to people must be in want of a life?

--Lauren Morrill

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

A real book is not one that we read, but one that reads us.

--W. H. Auden

Some books are to be tasted; others swallowed; and some to be chewed and digested.

--Francis Bacon

Books, like friends, should be few and well chosen.

--Samuel Paterson

Books are not men and yet they stay alive.

--Stephen Vincent Benét

The books that help you the most are those which make you think the most.

--Theodore Parker

The newest books are those that never grow old.

--Holbrook Jackson

Some books leave us free and some books make us free.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

A book is a mirror: If an ass peers into it, you can't expect an apostle to look out.

—George Christoph  
Lichtenberg

That is a good book which is opened with expectation and closed in profit.

--Amos Bronson Alcott

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

--Henry David Thoreau

My books are water; those of the great geniuses is wine. Everybody drinks water.

--Mark Twain

A house is not a home unless it contains food and fire for the mind as well as the body.

--Margaret Fuller

One could get a first-class education from a shelf of books five feet long.

--Charles William Eliot

There are perhaps no days of our childhood we lived so fully as those we believe we left without having lived them: those we spent with a favourite book.

--Marcel Proust

The most technologically efficient machine that man has ever invented is the book.

--Northrop Frye

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

--Edward Bulwer-Lytton

All the glory of the world would be buried in oblivion, unless God had provided mortals with the remedy of books.

--Richard De Bury

Everyone who knows how to read has it in their power to magnify themselves, to multiply the ways in which they exist, to make their life full, significant, and interesting.

--Aldous Huxley



Book lovers never go to bed alone.

--Unknown

Books fall open,  
you fall in.

--David McCord

I hate books. They only teach us to talk about what we do not know. It is said that Hermes engraved the elements of science on pillars for fear his discoveries might perish in a deluge. If he had impressed them firmly on the human brain, they would have been kept safe there by tradition.

--Jean Jacques Rousseau

I know many books which have bored their readers, but I know of none which has done real evil.

--Voltaire

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

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

--Sir John Harington

When I was in my twenties and broke, I'd buy books before food. A meal will sustain you for a few hours, a good book will sustain you for life.

--Gabrielle Zevin

The enormous multiplication of books in every branch of knowledge is one of the greatest evils of this age; since it presents one of the most serious obstacles to the acquisition of correct information, by throwing in the reader's way piles of lumber in which he must painfully grope for the scraps of useful matter, peradventure interspersed.

--Edgar Allan Poe

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

--Paxton Hood

Though books, as Milton says, may be the embalming of mighty spirits, they are also the resurrection of rebellious, reactionary, fantastical, and wicked spirits! In books dwell all the demons and all the angels of the human mind. It is for this reason that a bookshop—especially a second-hand bookshop—is an arsenal of explosives, an armoury of revolutions, an opium den of reactions. And just because books are repository of all the redemptions and damnations, all the sanities and insanities, of the divine anarchy or the soul, they are still, as they have always been, an object of suspicion to every kind of ruling authority.

--John Cowper Powys

There are three kinds of book owners. The first has all the standard sets and best sellers—unread, untouched. (This deluded individual owns wood-pulp and ink, not books.) The second has a great many books—a few of them read through, most of them dipped into, but all of them as clean and shiny as the day they were bought. (This person would probably like to make books his own, but is restrained by a false respect for their physical appearance.) The third have a few books or many—every one of them dog-eared and dilapidated, shaken and loosened by continual use, marked and scribbled from front to back. (This man owns books.)

--Mortimer J. Adler

As a writer, I hold uncut pages to be comment on an owner and an insult to an author. A book for me is something to be read, not kept under glass or in a safe. I want to dog-ear it, to underline it, to annotate it, and mark my favorite passages, and make my own index on the blank pages at the back.

--John Mason Brown

The great thing about a book is having it in one's home like a medicine or an analgesic, a stimulus or a soporific when the drugstores are all closed. Late at night one's private library is like a medicine chest. One cannot tell what one will be in the mood for or what one's spirit will most urgently crave. Or if the analogy seems too medicinal, perhaps the refrigerator or cookie jar will do.

--Irwin Edman

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

--Thomas Carlyle

It is no more necessary that a man should remember the different dinners and suppers which have made him healthy, than the different books which have made him wise. Let us see the result of good food in a strong body, and the result of great reading in a full and powerful mind.

--Sydney Smith

Every time I open a book, I risk my life....Every work of imagination offers another view of life, an invitation to spend a few days inside someone else's emotions.

--Anatole Broyard

All books are either dreams or swords,  
You can cut, or you can drug, with words.

--Amy Lowell

I told the Englishman that my alma mater was books, a good library. Every time I catch a plane, I have with me a book that I want to read. And that's a lot of books. If I weren't out there every day battling the white man, I could spend the rest of my life reading. Just to satisfy my curiosity.

--Malcolm X

In books we have the compendium of all human experience. We may use them or neglect them as we will, but if we use them, we may share the courage and endurance of adventurers, the thoughts of sages, the vision of poets and the raptures of lovers, and—some few of us perhaps—the ecstasies of Saints.

--Sir Basil Blackwell

If you cannot read all your books, at any rate handle, or as it were, fondle them—peer into them, let them fall open where they will read, from the first sentence that arrests the eye, set them back on the shelves with your own hands, arrange them on your own plan so that you at least know where they are. Let them be your friends; let them at any rate be your acquaintances. If they cannot enter the circle of your life, do not deny them at least a nod of recognition.

--Winston Churchill

It should be possible to exist with only a short shelf of books, to read and give away. After all—we may not open a book, once read, for ten years or more. But the act of reading has made it part of us—to relinquish it would be to lose an extension of being.

--Pam Brown

Certain books have exerted a profound influence on history, culture civilization and scientific thought throughout recorded time....In every historical era, we find overwhelming evidence of the power of the written word, without which a high state of civilization and culture is inconceivable in any time or place.

--Robert B. Downs

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

If anyone has any doubt about the importance of books, or about the adage that the pen is mightier than the sword, it's worth considering that Plato's *Republic*, the *Bible*, the *Koran*, Darwin's *Origin of Species*, Marx's *Das Kapital*, Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, and *The Thoughts of Mao Tse-tung* have probably changed the course of history as much as any process or event, any individual or any nation.

--Unknown

For children, the joy of a book is not merely the story but the feel, the taste, the smell of it—the texture of the paper, the size and shape of the typeface, the illustrations, flaws, marks, even the numbering of the pages.

My Peter Pan was the cheapest of editions, with an indented Mabel Lucy Atwell Peter on the red cover. The paper was thick, the illustration line drawings set into the text. I still know that little book as if I held it in my hands. The memory holds the cold air of my bedroom, the nightlight in its saucer, the car lights crossing the ceiling, my father's voice.

--Pamela Brown

The worst thing about new books is that they keep us from reading old ones.

--Joseph Joubert

We have entered a world of shorthand, precis, digest, summary, news flash, comic strip. We are bombarded with visual images cutting from one to another, stabbing at the mind and put out with the rubbish sacks at the end of the week.

The novel that took a man or woman years to create—in research, in the planning of the plot and counter-plot, in construction—each word chosen each phrase weighed against another, themes recurring, climaxes achieved—is now reduced to a four part serial, produced with pride in the accuracy of its sets and costumes, brilliantly acted, the music of the background authentic to the period. The words, but not the minds. The science, but not the significance.

The book has been made a thing to watch, not to live. We must fight to save the written word as we fight to save the whale. We must keep in our minds a place apart, a sanctuary, where a lamp lights only the table at which we sit, where the curtains are drawn against the present time. Let us begin.

--Pamela Brown

Books are the main source of our knowledge, our reservoir of faith, memory, wisdom, morality, poetry, philosophy, history, and science.

--Daniel J. Boorstin

In books lie the soul of the whole Past Time; the articulate audible voice of the Past, when the body and material substances of it has altogether vanished like a dream.

--Thomas Carlyle

They (books) support us in solitude....They help us to forget the coarseness of men and things, compose our cares and our passions, and lay our disappointments to sleep.

--Stephanie Félicité Genlis

Just the knowledge that a good book is waiting one at the end of a long day makes that day happier.

--Kathleen Norris

Some people may contend that there is no image more charming than a child holding a puppy or a kitten. But for me that's a distant second. When I see a child clutching a book...to his or her tiny bosom, I'm moved. Children can possess a book in a way they can never possess a video game, a TV show, or a Darth Vader doll. A book comes alive when they read it. They give it life themselves by understanding it.

--Chris Van Allsburg

Books to authors are kind of like children to parents. They tend to come along one at a time, and you try to give each one the best you know how. But there comes a time with both books and children when you have to send them out to the world. From that point on, you become a spectator.

--Alex Haley

Though I have little knowledge of the business of books, I can see that reading is far from the defunct or declining art as some have claimed. The endless, bland repetition emanating from the 'tube' is driving people back to the more personal experience found in books.

--Margaret Atwood

We all know that books burn—yet we have the greater knowledge that books cannot be killed by fire. People die, but books never die. No man and no force can take from the world the books that embody man's eternal fight against tyranny. In this war, we know, books are weapons.

—Franklin D. Roosevelt

Any ordinary man can...surround himself with two thousand books...and thenceforward have at least one place in the world in which it is possible to be happy.

--Augustine Birrell

There's no thief like a bad book.

--Italian Proverb

We should be as careful of the books we read, as of the company we keep. The dead very often have more power than the living.

--Tryon Edwards

Books are but waste paper unless we spend in action the wisdom we get from thought.

--Bulwer-Lytton

Perhaps it is only in childhood that books have any deep influence on our lives...in childhood all books are books of divination, telling us about the future, and like the fortune-teller who sees a long journey in the cards or death by water, they influence the future. I suppose that is why books excited us so much. What do we ever get nowadays from reading to equal the excitement and the revelation of those first fourteen years?

--Graham Greene

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

All men feel themselves akin, and on terms of intimacy, with those whom they know, or might have known, in books.

--Nathaniel Hawthorne

In one way or another, every book is a cry for help.

--Simone de Beauvoir

Of all the inanimate objects, of all men's creations, books are the nearest to us, for they contain our very thought, our ambitions, our indignations, our illusions, our fidelity to truth and our persistent leaning toward error.

--Joseph Conrad

For books are more than books. They are the life, the very heart and core of ages past, the reason why men lived and worked and died, the essence and quintessence of their lives.

--Amy Lowell

Books are, in one sense, the basis of all social progress.

--Karl Marx

I came to appreciate what good books really were and realized how much I needed them and they gradually gave me a stoical confidence in myself: I was not alone in this world and I would not perish!

--Maxim Gorky

Only in books has mankind known perfect truth, love and beauty.

--George Bernard Shaw

Books, after all, are extraordinary things; thoughts made visible, paper and ink sculptures of the mind, time and space made into words.

--Daniel Johnson

A classic is classic not because it conforms to certain structural rules, or fits certain definitions (of which its author had quite probably never heard). It is classic because of a certain eternal and irrepressible freshness.

--Ezra Pound

A great book should leave you with many experiences, and slightly exhausted at the end. You live several lives while reading it.

--William Styron

Books would be precious things indeed, if the mere possession of them guaranteed culture to their owners.

--Lucian of Samosata

A man loses contact with reality if he is not surrounded by his books.

--François Mitterand

Books are like rivers, meandering this way and that, but taking us on a steady, flowing course to somewhere different.

—Carla H. Krueger

Books worth reading once are worth reading twice; and what is most important of all, the masterpieces of literature are worth reading a thousand times.

--John Morley

There is no reader so parochial as the one who reads none but this morning's books. Books are not rolls, to be devoured only when they are hot and fresh. A good book retains its interior heat and will warm a generation yet unborn.

--Clifton Fadiman

Books come at my call and return when I desire them; they are never out of humor and they answer all my questions with readiness. Some present in review before me the events of past ages; others reveal to me the secrets of Nature. These teach me how to live, and those how to die; these dispel my melancholy by their mirth, and amuse me by their sallies of wit. Some there are who prepare my soul to suffer everything, to desire nothing, and to become thoroughly acquainted with itself. In a word, they open the door to all the arts and sciences.

--Petrarch

Books are the open avenues down which, like kings coming to be crowned, great ideas and inspirations move to the abbey of man's soul.

--Ernest Dressel North

He that loveth a book, will never want a faithful friend, a wholesome counselor, a cheerful companion, an effectual comforter. By study, by reading, by thinking, one may innocently divert and pleasantly entertain himself, as in all weathers, as in all fortunes.

--Isaac Barrow

No furniture so charming as books, even if you never open them, or read a single word.

--Sydney Smith

Please return this book: I find that though many of my friends are poor arithmeticians, they are nearly all good bookkeepers.

--Sir Walter Scott

He who would be well-traveled should journey through the *Bible's* books,  
For the whole world can be seen there.

--Sibylle Schwarz



Book—what they make a movie out of for television.

--Leonard Louis Levinson

The world of books is the most remarkable creation of man. Nothing else that he builds ever lasts. Monuments fall; nations perish; civilizations grow old and die out; and, after an era of darkness, new races build others. But in the world of books are volumes that have seen this happen again and again, and yet live on, still young, still as fresh as the day they were written, still telling men's hearts of the hearts of men centuries dead.

And even the books that do not last long, penetrate their own times at least, sailing farther than Ulysses even dreamed of, like ships on the seas. It is the author's part to call into being their cargoes and passengers,—living thoughts and rich bales of study and jeweled ideas. And as for the publishers, it is they who build the fleet, plan the voyage, and sail on, facing wreck, till they find every possible harbor that will value their burden.

--Clarence S. Day

A book is just a way to *remember* a story, like a photograph is a way to remember a friend.

--Anne Lindbergh

From your parents, you learn love and laughter and how to put one foot in front of the other. But when books are opened, you discover that you have wings.

--Helen Hayes

You never love a book the way you do when you are 10.

--Daniel Handler

Books have a weight and texture; they make a pleasant presence in the hand. Nothing smells as good as a new book, especially if you get your nose right down in the binding, where you can still catch an acrid tang of the glue. The only thing close is the peppery smell of an old one. The odor of an old book is the odor of history, and for me, the look of a new one is still the look of the future.

--Stephen King

For some of us, books are as important as almost anything else on earth. What a miracle it is that out of these small, flat, rigid pieces of paper unfolds world after world, worlds that sing to you, comfort and quiet you or excite you.

--Anne Lamott

Literature and butterflies are the two sweetest passions known to man.

--Vladimir Nabokov

When you sell a man a book you don't sell just twelve ounces of paper and ink and glue—you sell him a whole new life. Love and friendship and humour and ships at sea by night—there's all heaven and earth in a book, a real book.

--Christopher Morley

Make your books your companions.

--*The Talmud*

A bookstore is one of the only pieces of evidence we have that people are still thinking.

--Jerry Seinfeld

The covers of this book are too far apart.

--Ambrose Bierce

Every book is a children's book if the kid can read!

--Mitch Hedberg

Americans will listen, but they do not care to read. War and Peace must wait for the leisure of retirement, which never really comes: meanwhile it helps to furnish the living room.

--Anthony Burgess

The possession of a book becomes a substitute for reading it.

--Anthony Burgess

Autobiographies are only useful as the lives you read about and analyze may suggest to you something that you may find useful in your own journey through life.

--Eleanor Roosevelt

An autobiography is an obituary in serial form with the last installment missing.

--Quentin Crisp

Old books that have ceased to be of service should no more be abandoned than should old friends who have ceased to give pleasure.

--Bernard Baruch

Books, like proverbs, receive their chief value from the stamp and esteem of the ages through which they have passed.

--J. Paul Getty

When we read a story, we inhabit it. The covers of the book are like a roof and four walls. What is to happen next will take place within the four walls of the story. And this is possible because the story's voice makes everything its own.

--John Berger

Bears store fat  
chipmunks gather nuts  
and I collect books  
For the coming winter.

--Nikki Giovanni

The first books I was interested in were all about baseball. But I can't think of one single book that changed my life in any way.

--Charles Kuralt

We love stories and we love narrative; we love to get lost in an author's world. That's not going to go away; that's going to thrive. But the physical book really has had a 500-year run. It's probably the most successful technology ever. It's hard to come up with things that have had a longer run. If Gutenberg were alive today, he would recognize the physical book and know how to operate it immediately. Given how much change there has been everywhere else, what's remarkable is how stable the book has been for so long. But no technology, not even one as elegant as the book, lasts forever.

--Jeff Bezos

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

--Ray Bradbury

Mysteries and thrillers are not the same things, though they are literary siblings. Roughly put, I would say the distinction is that mysteries emphasize motive and psychology whereas thrillers rely more heavily on action and plot. Some mysteries are thrillers and some thrillers are mysteries, but not all mysteries are thrillers, nor are all thrillers mysteries.

--Jon Meacham

An autobiography usually reveals nothing bad about its writer except his memory.  
--Franklin P. Jones

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

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. Herman Melville died in utter obscurity. F. Scott Fitzgerald's books were either out of print or not selling when he died. Paul Bowles was able to live and write (and smoke dope) only because he wrote for *Holiday*, the great old travel magazine.  
--Paul Theroux

The arrival of Gutenberg's printing press, in the 15th century, set off another round of teeth gnashing. The Italian humanist Hieronimo Squarciarico worried that the easy availability of books would lead to intellectual laziness, making men less studious and weakening their minds. Others argued that cheaply printed book and broadsheets would undermine religious authority, demean the work of scholars and scribes, and spread sedition and debauchery.  
--Nicholas Carr

Book lovers do it between the sheets, and they never go to bed alone.  
--Michael Larsen

A good book is the purest essence of the human soul.  
--Thomas Carlyle

For a medium of communication to become integrated into our lives, it has to be usable in the four B's: bed, bath, beach, and bus. You can order books online and download them in seconds. But I can't imagine the day when readers would rather curl up with a flat screen of any size to read *War and Peace*.  
--Michael Larsen

Rather than being a threat to books, technology will liberate the medium to do what it does best. Nothing else offers the tactile feeling and experience of reading a book. As an affordable, efficient, portable, durable, sometimes beautiful, sometimes sacred means of communication, books will remain part of our lives.  
--Michael Larsen

Books are not the foundation of civilization, they are civilization.  
--Ed Koch

Sometimes a person needs a story more than food to stay alive.

--Barry Lopez

Of course, I thought little of my prescribed lessons, and right here it was greatly to my advantage to have a sensible tutor wise enough to connive at this and other irregularities of the same nature. In this way I ran through Virgil's Aeneid, then Terence, then Plautus, and some Italian comedies, allured by the pleasure of the subject. On the other hand, had my tutor been so foolish as to deprive me of this amusement, I verily believe I would have brought nothing away from college but a hatred of books, as most of our young gentlemen do.

--Montaigne

Imagine back. With no television to watch, no radio or MP3 player to listen to, no phones, no websites, no video games, no movies, no texting, books were the chief form of entertainment of the day. People wrote letters, and people read books. And in the process, they found peace and relaxation, charms seemingly lost in our multitasking, hyperactive age.

--*Daily Herald* Editorial

Books. Storehouses of knowledge and information, fascinating vessels of the imagination, inspirations of eloquent literature, records of history—they are all of these things.

--*Daily Herald* Editorial

Other animals learn essentially what a lifetime can teach. We learn what an accumulation of lifetimes teaches. That is primarily the result of books. Generations can and do pass down stories and wisdoms through conversation, but the limits of that transmission are fairly severe. Books extended that reach immensely. Because of that, the life of a dog today is not much different from the life of a dog 2,000 years ago. But for human beings, a vast difference in lifestyles and understanding! The product not just of high intelligence, but of high intelligence wrapped and passed down in books.

--*Daily Herald* Editorial

Book: A blog for people with attention spans.

--Stephen Colbert

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

I've been reading entirely with ebooks for about nine months without touching paper. Ebooks are great...but there are things I miss from paper books....The smell of books, the feel, the weight of books....When I read my books in public, no one has any idea of what I'm reading. Gone are the days when another reader comes up to me in a café because he/she has seen the book I'm reading and wants to connect over that book....My bookshelf seems to have suffered an untimely death, with no new books coming in to accompany or replace the old books. I've got more space in the house, for sure, but gone are the days when a friend or my wife or my daughter can peruse my library and find something of interest that is new.

--Bob Sprankle

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

--Niall Ferguson, 2011

There is something sublime about print that has nothing to do with content. Hard copy is a full-on sensory experience. Yes, the words are the same, whether perceived on paper or on a small, illuminated screen. But the experience is not. One can read 'One Hundred Years of Solitude' on a Kindle or an iPad, but one cannot see, hear, feel and smell the story in the same way. I'm unlikely to race to the sofa, there to nuzzle an electronic gizmo, with the same anticipation as with a book. Or to the hammock with the same relish I would with a new magazine....Paper, because it is real, provides an organic connection to our natural world: The tree from whence the paper came; the sun, water and soil that nourished the tree. By contrast, a digital device is alien, man-made, hard and cold to human flesh.

--Kathleen Parker

One of my earliest and fondest memories is of reading with my father, who taught me not only to love words but also to appreciate the smell of a book. Even today, I judge a book by its smell and am always surprised when others don't employ this obvious method of criticism....With near certainty, I can predict that no future adult will fondly recall the scent of a favorite, childhood laptop.

--Kathleen Parker

Travel is like a good, challenging book: it demands presentness—the ability to live completely in the moment, absorbed in the words or vision of reality before you. And like serious reading itself, travel has become an act of resistance against the distractions of the electronic age, and against all the worries that weigh us down, thanks to that age. A good book deserves to be finished, just as a haunting landscape tempts further experience of it, and further research into it. Travel and serious reading, because they demand sustained focus, stand athwart the non-existent attention spans that deface our current time on earth.

--Robert D. Kaplan

All things happen in a cycle...A little bookstore had succeeded and grown into a bigger bookstore. Seeing the potential for profit, the superstore chains rose up and crushed the independents, then Amazon rose up and crushed the superstore chains. Now that we could order any book at any hour without having to leave the screen in front of us, we realized what we had lost: the community center, the human interaction, the recommendation of a smart reader rather than a computer algorithm telling us what other shoppers had purchased. I promised whoever was listening that from those very ashes, the small independent bookstore would rise again.

--Ann Patchett

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

Before the arrival of the 40<sup>th</sup> and final installment of *The Old Curiosity Shop*, in 1841, American readers of the series were forced to wait. And wait. And wait—not just for Charles Dickens to finish his story, but for his completed work to cross the Atlantic. When the ship bearing the resolution of the series finally docked in New York, a mob desperate to learn the fate of the tale’s protagonist, Little Nell, stormed the wharf. The ensuing scene would make a modern-day publisher swoon: a band of readers passionately demanding to learn how the story ends.

--Megan Garber

The day Johannes Gutenberg finished his wooden printing press in 1440, Western civilization turned onto a path toward more efficient, accessible communication of knowledge. The ensuing democratization of ideas had a profound impact on societies in the second half of the second millennium.

--Christina H. Paxson

Many of the books on my shelf at home are books I didn’t set out to buy, but ran across while browsing the stacks at a bookstore, fell in love with, and bought.

--Rod Dreher

All one really needs in life is two friends, books, and a Pekingese.

--P. G. Wodehouse

If an English middle-class family owned just three books, along with the *Bible* and Shakespeare would be Fitzgerald (*The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*). It was a kind of universal badge of culture.

--Dick Davis

A happy life consists of retirement, rural quiet, friendship, books.

--James Thomson

We live in a screen age, and to say to a kid, 'I'd love for you to look at a book but I hate it when you look at the screen' is just bizarre. It reflects our own prejudices and comfort zone. It's nothing but fear of change, of being left out.

--Marc Prensky

Authors are actors, books are theaters.

--Wallace Stevens

Books give off more and nastier dust than any other class of objects yet invented, and the top of a book is the place where every bluebottle fly prefers to die.

--Eric Arthur Blair

A book is simply the container of an idea--like a bottle; what is inside the book is what matters.

--Angela Carter

Life-transforming ideas have always come to me through books.

--Bell Hooks

There are books that grow with the reader as the reader grows, like a graft to a tree.

--Rebecca Mead

Rereading, we find a new book.

--Mason Cooley

All Bibles are man-made.

--Thomas A. Edison

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

Style and Structure are the essence of a book; great ideas are hogwash.

--Vladimir Nabokov



I love nothing more than to be surprised by a book—to find that a read I thought would be all on the surface is emotionally resonant or compelling for another reason.

--Christina Hogrebe

Books are the permanent repository of all mankind's knowledge and wisdom, a painstakingly detailed record of our entire existence. Please feel free to thumb through them, although chances are you're going to want to wait for the movie.

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

Romance novels are the only books that take less time to write than they do to read. They teach lonely women about passionate love, maritime history and 18<sup>th</sup> century undergarments.

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

Self-help books are books whose authors 'help themselves' to sad people's money.

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

Having your book turned into a movie is like seeing your oxen turned into bouillon cubes.

--John le Carre

To read a book, to think it over, and to write out notes is a useful exercise; a book which will not repay some hard thought is not worth publishing.

--Maria Mitchell

It's not name dropping, but not many people can say, like me, that they spent the day with the likes of Francis Bacon or that boring drunk Dylan Thomas. You don't forget things like that.

--Jeffrey Bernard

I don't think anyone wants a reader to be completely lost - certainly not to the point of giving up - but there's something to be said for a book that isn't instantly disposable, that rewards a second reading.

--John M. Ford

Filling a bookcase is like gathering a social circle.

--May Lamberton Becker

Happiness is an island of solitude with books. Not material things—but wisdom.

--Anna May Wong

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

—Katherine Mansfield

Books that do go into actual print will evolve into much more precious products. They will be better-printed, better-bound, better-produced and better-marketed, even at much higher prices. The e-books we download on our Kindles, iPads, and their like will become something like the paperbacks of the past.

--Alberto Vitale

Books can teach us something about how to live our lives and why moral questions we face can be answered in different ways than we thought.

--Gary Saul Morson

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

A best-seller was a book which somehow sold well because it was selling well.

—Daniel J. Boorstin

You must read dreadful dumb books and glorious books, and let them wrestle in beautiful fights inside your head, vulgar one moment, brilliant the next. You must lurk in libraries and climb the stacks like ladders to sniff books like perfumes and wear books like hats upon your crazy heads.

—Ray Bradbury

It does not matter how many books you have, but how good the books are which you have.

—Lucius Annaeus Seneca

books are like really long text messages. really?

—*Library Bulletin Board*

Judge the goodness of a book by the energy of the punches it has given you. I believe the greatest characteristic of genius, is, above all, force.

—Gustave Flaubert

Books are as important as almost anything else on earth. What a miracle it is that out of these small, flat, rigid squares of paper unfolds world after world after world, worlds that sing to you, comfort and quiet or excite you. Books help us understand who we are and how we are to behave. They show us what community and friendship mean; they show us how to live and die.

—Anne Lamott

Books are a real solace, friendships are good but action is better than all.

—John Burns

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

—Raymond Chandler

I feel that an old-fashioned paper book trumps all. Its expectant presence is goad and encouragement. Something seems to happen between brain, eye and experienced hand that may stir into consciousness a thought otherwise hidden. Or it may just be that I am a curmudgeonly computer Luddite.

—Malcolm E. Brown

A truly good book teaches me better than to read it. I must soon lay it down, and commence living on its hint. What I began by reading, I must finish by acting.

—Henry David Thoreau

The only good thing about books is that they can be adapted into films.

—Michael Votto

Books had instant replay long before televised sports.

—Bern Williams

The only reason I read a book is because I cannot see and converse with the man who wrote it.

—Woodrow Wilson

The experience gathered from books, though often valuable, is but the nature of learning; whereas the experience gained from actual life is one of the nature of wisdom.

—Samuel Smiles

God forbid that any book should be banned. The practice is as indefensible as infanticide.

—Rebecca West

It is from books that wise people derive consolation in the troubles of life.

—Victor Hugo

The books I loved in childhood - the first loves - I've read so often that I've internalized them in some really essential way: they are more inside me now than out.

—Donna Tartt

The book...offers itself to the reader's freedom...the writer appeals to the reader's freedom to collaborate in the production of his work.

—Jean-Paul Sartre

Beauty...in a book hides itself; it acts by persuasion,...it inclines a person without his suspecting it.

—Jean-Paul Sartre

Books open up your mind the same way music does. They work your imagination and hit you in a place reality simply does not.

—Rick Springfield

I was looking in books for a bigger world in which I lived. In some blind and instinctive way I knew what was happening in those books was also happening all around me. And I was trying to make a connection between the books and the life I saw and the life I lived.

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 the most were the very things that connected me with all the people who were alive, or who had ever been alive.

—James Baldwin

Books can play a unique role in fostering better human relationships among all people, especially if those books selected genuinely and realistically reflect the multi-cultural and multi-ethnic composition of that society. The insights gained from this exposure may be related to those immediate problems and socioeconomic conditions, such as family and peer relationships, racial isolation, poverty and religious prejudice young readers may face.

—Jesse Perry

Literature is an effective means of preserving, transmitting, and improving the cultures that make up our pluralistic society. Change is a normal and inescapable result of those sociocultural and physical worlds on whose stages we act out our life's roles. Often, however, change is difficult to understand and accept. Books can serve for readers as a bridge between generations, between the past and the present, between what is and what ought to be. Children's horizons can be broadened through vicarious encounters during their quest for self-understanding and acceptance of others.

—James E. Kerber

Transfer of learning is possible from books to real life. Certain basic needs are common to all people and to all times in history. A child's needs are at first intensely and narrowly personal but quickly broaden and become more widely socialized. In the struggle to satisfy both personal and societal needs, the child is constantly seeking to maintain a balance between personal happiness and social approval. Books can help directly and indirectly.

—James E. Kerber

The book that is psychologically oriented in its dominant plot line outlives the one that simply tells what happened.

—G. Robert Carlsen

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

English teachers and their students must have freedom to read and see and think and discuss and learn if there is any hope of reality entering the classroom. Where censors grant teachers 'limited' freedom as long as students read only 'wholesome' books and 'uplifting' magazines about 'good' Americans and 'happy' things, view only 'suitable' and 'clean' and 'Christian' films, create only 'optimistic' and 'positive' and 'inspirational' media materials, and discuss only 'noncontroversial' and 'safe' topics, there is no possibility of education and the search for truth, only the indoctrination into the community's contemporary mores.

—Kenneth L. Donelson

Books are the means to immortality. Plato lives forever, as do Dickens, and Dr. Seuss, Soames Forsyte, Jo March, Scrooge, Anna Karenina and Vronsky. Over and over again Heathcliff wanders the moor searching for his Cathy. Over and over again Ahab fights the whale. Through them all we experience other times, other places, other lives. We manage to become much more than our own selves.

—Anna Quindlen

In literature, as in love, we are astonished at what is chosen by others.

—André Maurois

A novel is like a gland pill - it nips off the cream of my hysterics and gets them running on track in a book where they belong instead of rioting all over my person.

—Dawn Powell

Even bad books are books and therefore sacred.

—Gunter Grass

They say money can't buy happiness, but I have a receipt from the bookstore telling a whole different story.

—*The Reader's Nook*

Books serve to show a man that those original thoughts of his aren't very new at all.

—Abraham Lincoln

Our high respect for a well read person is praise enough for literature.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

Only two classes of books are of universal appeal. The very best and the very worst.

—Ford Maddox

I can't go back to work yet; I still have books left to read.

—Unknown

Every book you've ever read is just a different combination of 26 letters.

—Unknown

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

I would be most content if my children grew up to be the kind of people who think decorating consists mostly of building enough bookshelves.

—Anna Quindlen

### **I LIKE BIG BOOKS AND I CANNOT LIE**

You other readers can't deny  
When a good book walks in with  
A good plot base  
And a big spine in your face  
You get sprung!  
Wanna get out your notepads  
'Cause you noticed that book  
Was dense.  
Deep in the book I'm reading,  
I'm hooked and I can't stop  
Speeding, through Baby  
I wanna get that literature,  
And Instagram that picture,  
My teachers try to train me  
But that book you've got  
Makes me so brainy!  
(Baby got books!)

—*Virginia Beach  
Public  
Library*

Every burned book enlightens the world.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Some women have a weakness for shoes. I can go barefoot if necessary. I have a weakness for books.

—Oprah Winfrey

Man ceased to be an ape, vanquished the ape, on the day the first book was written.

—Arthur Helps

One does not simply read books...one climbs inside them and lives there.

—*Random House Books*

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

A book is a fragile creature; it suffers the wear of time; it fears rodents, the elements and clumsy hands. So the librarian protects the books not only against mankind but also against nature and devotes his life to this war with the forces of oblivion.

—Umberto Eco

All that I know about my life, it seems, I have learned in books.  
—Jean-Paul Sartre

Having a huge number of books is not exactly about reading them all—it's about having the possibility of reading them all.

—Michael Lipsey

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

I may seem sweet and nice but if you borrow my book and forget to return it, I will break a level of crazy that will make your nightmare seem like a happy place.  
—[someecards.com](http://someecards.com)

Book: A place where the dead will never die.  
—Dan L. Miller

Borrowers of books - those mutilators of collections, spoilers of the symmetry of shelves, and creators of odd volumes.  
—Charles Lamb

An autobiography is a book a person writes about his own life and it is usually full of all sorts of boring details.  
—Roald Dahl

I don't understand this irony - valuable things like cars, gold, diamond are made up of hard materials but most valuable things like money, contracts and books are made up of soft paper.  
—Amit Kalantri

Each time you read a book, a tree smiles knowing there's life after death.  
—Unknown



I, too, feel the need to reread the books I have already read, but at every rereading I seem to be reading a new book, for the first time. Is it I who keep changing and seeing new things of which I was not previously aware? Or is reading a construction that assumes form, assembling a great number of variables, and therefore something that cannot be repeated twice according to the same pattern? Every time I seek to relive the emotion of a previous reading, I experience different and unexpected impressions, and do not find again those of before. At certain moments it seems to me that between one reading and the next there is a progression: in the sense, for example, of penetrating further into the spirit of the text, or of increasing my critical detachment. At other moments, on the contrary, I seem to retain the memory of the readings of a single book one next to another, enthusiastic or cold or hostile, scattered in time without a perspective, without a thread that ties them together. The conclusion I have reached is that reading is an operation without object; or that its true object is itself. The book is an accessory aid, or even a pretext.

—Italo Calvino

Have you never picked up a book you've read before, and found it speaks to you in a new way?

—Django Wexler

A brand new book is a beautiful thing, all promise and fresh pages, the neatly squared spine, the brisk sense of a journey beginning. But a well-worn book also has its pleasures, the soft caress and give of the paper's edges, the comfort, like an old shawl, of an oft-read story.

—Lewis Buzbee

If you don't find a good teacher, find a good book.

—Amit Kalantri

For my success I am immensely grateful to God, my parents, my family, my friends, my teachers and to the books I read.

—Amit Kalantri

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

A child should never be without a book.

—Unknown

Prolonged, indiscriminate reviewing of books is a quite exceptionally thankless, irritating and exhausting job. It not only involves praising trash but constantly inventing reactions towards books about which one has no spontaneous feeling whatever.

—George Orwell

Books, whether literary novels or histories or cookbooks, are our greatest legacy and contribution to the world—they allow us to not just live better, but to live more lives than just our own.

—Dado Derviskadic

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*

Never read a book that is not a year old.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Books are a uniquely portable magic. I usually listen to one in the car (always unabridged; I think abridged audiobooks are the pits), and carry another wherever I go. You just never know when you'll want an escape hatch: mile-long lines at toll-booth plazas, the fifteen minutes you have to spend in the hall of some boring college building waiting for your advisor (who's got some yank-off in there threatening to commit suicide because he/she is flunking Custom Kurmfurling 101) to come out so you can get his signature on a drop-card, airport boarding lounges, laundromats on rainy afternoons, and the absolute worst, which is the doctor's office when the guy is running late and you have to wait half an hour in order to have something sensitive mauled. At such times I find a book vital. If I have to spend time in purgatory before going to one place or the other, I guess I'll be all right as long as there's a lending library (if there is it's probably stocked with nothing but novels by Danielle Steel and Chicken Soup books.

—Stephen King

Who ever converses among old books will be hard to please among the new.

—William Temple

There is no harm in reading any number of unimportant books for pastime, but the significant books must be taken cautiously. You don't want them to get in the way of what may perhaps be growing and brooding in yourself, taking its own time.

—Christopher Morley

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

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 lie 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

The burning of an author's books, imprisonment for opinion's sake, has always been the tribute that an ignorant age pays to the genius of its time.

—Joseph Lewis

Every book ever written is just a torch being carried into an incredibly deep, incredibly dark, cavern of the imagination, illuminating only a small portion of the potential ideas it contains.

—Jeff Somers

Always have a book at hand, in the parlor, on the table, for the family; a book of condensed thought and striking anecdote, of sound maxims and truthful apothegms. It will impress on your own mind a thousand valuable suggestions, and teach your children a thousand lessons of truth and duty. Such a book is a casket of jewels for your household.

—Tryon Edwards

Give me a man or woman who has read a thousand books and you give me an interesting companion. Give me a man or woman who has read perhaps three and you give me a very dangerous enemy indeed.

—Anne Rice

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

—G. M. Trevelyan

Books are a hard-bound drug with no danger of an overdose. I am a happy victim of books.

—Karl Lagerfeld

Books are the perfect entertainment: no commercials, no batteries, hours of enjoyment for each dollar spent. What I wonder is why everybody doesn't carry a book around for those inevitable dead spots in life.

—Stephen King

The book dies a real death for me when I write the last word. I have little sorrow and then go on to a new book which is alive. The rows of my books on the shelf are to me like very well embalmed corpses. They are neither alive nor mine. I have no sorrow for them because I have forgotten them, forgotten in its truest sense.

--John Steinbeck

All good books have one thing in common—they are truer than if they had really happened, and after you've read one of them you will feel that all that happened, happened to you and that it belongs to you forever: the happiness and unhappiness, good and evil, ecstasy and sorrow, the food, the wine, beds, people and the weather.

--Ernest Hemingway

If I read a book and it makes my whole body so cold no fire can ever warm me, I know that is poetry.

—Emily Dickinson

Every single novel owes a debt to books that came before it. To paraphrase the words of the Bible, there is simply nothing new under the sun.

—Jeff Somers

For my part, if a book is well written, I always find it too short.

—Jane Austen

I hang on to books. I love them. I even think they're very nice decor in a room - far better than paintings.

—Norman MacCaig

It's not hoarding if it's books.

—Unknown

When it comes to somebody investing in a hardcover, it's something you want to keep. Everything from a cloth-case wrap to a leatherette to a foil-stamped cover, heavier paper, better binding, innovative cover design. You have to give readers a choice, between a richer experience with paper and board and cloth, and a more sterile experience through an electronic reader.

—Dave Eggers

When we travel, we read books and *The New York Times* on the iPad. I'd much rather have a book.

—Joyce Carol Oates

The reflections and histories of men and women throughout the world are contained in books.... America's greatness is not only recorded in books, but it is also dependent upon each and every citizen being able to utilize public libraries.

—Terence Cooke

My lifelong love affair with books and reading continues unaffected by automation, computers, and all other forms of the twentieth-century gadgetry.

—Robert Downs

He who lends a book is an idiot. He who returns the book is more of an idiot.

—Arabic Proverb

Two forces are successfully influencing the education of a cultivated man: art and science. Both are united in the book.

—Maksim Gorky

There's nothing to match curling up with a good book when there's a repair job to be done around the house.

—Joe Ryan

That place that does contain  
My books, the best companions, is to me  
A glorious court, where hourly I converse  
With the old sages and philosophers;  
And sometimes, for variety, I confer  
With kings and emperors, and weigh their counsels;  
Calling their victories, if unjustly got,  
Unto a strict account, and, in my fancy,  
Deface their ill-placed statues.

—Francis Beaumont

The first thing naturally when one enters a scholar's study or library, is to look at his books. One gets the notion very speedily of his tastes and the range of his pursuits by a glance round his book-shelves.

—Oliver Wendell  
Holmes

The true University of these days is a Collection of Books.

—Thomas Carlyle

My books are very few, but then the world is before me—a library open to all—from which poverty of purse cannot exclude me—in which the meanest and most paltry volume is sure to furnish something to amuse, if not to instruct and improve.

—Joseph Howe

The student has his Rome, his Florence, his whole glowing Italy, within the four walls of his library. He has in his books the ruins of an antique world and the glories of a modern one.

—Henry Wadsworth  
Longfellow

The road to knowledge begins with the turn of the page.

—Abby Marks Beale

The sensation felt when touching paper differs from the coldness of metal or the perfection of plastic as it radiates a core warmth that we expect to come from a living object. Each fiber greets our hands in a comfortable, familiar tradition that we were introduced to as children, and constantly thereafter in school and at work. Most of the paper we use is bleached perfectly white with just enough texture to reliably meet the rubber rollers of a copy machine. Yet once in a while we are fortunate enough to encounter the kind of graphic design that...visually stimulates.

—John Maeda

A book is a human-powered film projector (complete with feature film) that advances at a speed fully customized to the viewer's mood or fancy. This rare harmony between object and user arises from the minimal skills required to manipulate a bound sequence of pages. Each piece of paper embodies a corresponding instant of time which remains frozen until liberated by the act of turning a page.

—John Maeda

We should not see print and electronic literature as in competition, but rather in conversation. The more voices that join in, the richer the dialogue is likely to be.

—N. Katherine Hayles

There is no reason why the same man should like the same books at eighteen and at forty-eight.

—Ezra Pound

The portability of the book, like that of the easel painting, added much to the new cult of individualism.

— Marshall McLuhan

Still, the E-book is not a passing thing, but here to stay as it becomes cheaper and improved. Nonetheless, it is really no more than a screen upon which to read, and it is clear that when enough people start reading them, electronic books will do for the ophthalmologists what taffy and caramels did for dentists.

—Martin Arnold

Every man must die sooner or later, but good books must be preserved.

—Don Vicente

You can never be too thin, too rich, or have too many books.

—Carter Burden

Book-love, I say again, lasts throughout life, it never flags or fails, but, like Beauty itself, is a joy forever.

—Holbrook Jackson

The written word remains. The spoken word takes wing and cannot be recalled.

—Horace

Every day books are published that contain no real artfulness in the lines, books made up of clichés and limp prose, stupid stories offering nothing but high concept and plot—or supra-literary books that shut out even a serious reader in the name of assertions about the right of an author to be dull for a good cause. (No matter how serious a book is, if it is not entertaining, it is a failure.)

--Richard Bausch

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

E-books seem magical to me....but something is certainly lost—the physicality of a book, how one makes a book one's own by reading it (scribbling in it, dog-earring pages, spilling coffee on it) and living with it as an object, sometimes a talisman....The greatest loss is the paper archive—no more a great stack of manuscripts, letters, and notebooks from a writer's life, but only a tiny pile of disks, little plastic cookies where once were calligraphic marvels.

--Paul Theroux

It is hard to say what interests a child in a book. They can become fascinated by the strangest things....But in general it is probably safe to assume that a successful child's book has many of the same elements as a successful adult book: gripping plot, interesting characters, a bit of surprise, and most important, competent writing.

--Sandra Schmidt

Book readers experienced a 20 percent reduction in risk of mortality over the 12 years of follow-up compared to nonbook readers.

—Yale University  
Researchers



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

How clearly I remember my childhood experiences of being catapulted into a book world....That first tumble into Wonderland is not easily forgotten, and it's also something that can't quite be replicated in adult life with the same intensity. The worlds you inhabit in childhood are stitched into the fabric of who you will grow to be.

—Ammi-Joan  
Paquette

In the highest civilization, the book is still the highest delight. He who has once known its satisfactions is provided with a resource against calamity.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

The more journalism I read and do, the more convinced I am not merely that ideas have consequences, but that only ideas have large and lasting consequences—behind every war there lurks an idea—and that books are still the primary carriers of ideas, including books of poetry and fiction. News gatherers, like news makers, might be agreeably humble by the definition of literature as news that makes news.

--George Will

I basically only read books that are over 2,000 years old.

—Hans-Georg Gadamer

Words fascinate me. They always have. For me, browsing in a dictionary is like being turned loose in a bank.

--Eddie Cantor

The English *Bible*—a book which if everything else in our language should perish, would alone suffice to show the whole extent of its beauty and power.

--Thomas Babington  
Macaulay

As sheer casual reading matter, I still find the English dictionary the most interesting book in our language.

--Albert Jay Nock

The most important book of a nation is the dictionary of its language.

--Constantin comte  
de Volney

Thy books should, like thy friends, not many be, yet such wherein men may thy judgment see.

—William Wycherley

The book you don't read can't help.

—Jim Rohn

Books were nice. In ten years' time, all reading will be via digital means. And yes, I know, you like the 'feel' of paper. Well, in ten years' time you'll hardly tell the difference as 'paper' itself becomes digitized.

—Shelley Blake-Plock

Meek young men grow up in colleges and believe it is their duty to accept the views which books have given, and grow up slaves.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

A university is just a group of buildings gathered around a library

—Shelby Foote

You must live feverishly in a library. Colleges are not going to do any good unless you are raised and live in a library every day of your life.

—Ray Bradbury

If it is noticed that much of my outside work concerns itself with libraries, there is an extremely good reason for this. I think that the better part of my education, almost as important as that secured in the schools and the universities, came from libraries.

—Irving Stone

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

In the case of good books, the point is not to see how many of them you can get through, but how many can get through to you.

—Mortimer Adler

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*

A good book can teach you about the world and about yourself. You learn more than how to read better; you also learn more about life. You become wiser. Not just more knowledgeable - books that provide nothing but information can produce that result. But wiser, in the sense that you are more deeply aware of the great and enduring truths of human life.

—Mortimer J. Adler

Wonder is the beginning of wisdom in learning from books as well as from nature.

—Mortimer J. Adler

A good book deserves an active reading. The activity of reading does not stop with the work of understanding what a book says. It must be completed by the work of criticism, the work of judging. The undemanding reader fails to satisfy this requirement, probably even more than he fails to analyze and interpret. He not only makes no effort to understand; he also dismisses a book simply by putting it aside and forgetting it. Worse than faintly praising it, he damns it by giving it no critical consideration whatever.

—Mortimer J. Adler

If you ask a living teacher a question, he will probably answer you. If you are puzzled by what he says, you can save yourself the trouble of thinking by asking him what he means. If, however, you ask a book a question, you must answer it yourself. In this respect a book is like nature or the world. When you question it, it answers you only to the extent that you do the work of thinking an analysis yourself.

—Mortimer J. Adler

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 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

Books are absent teachers.

—Mortimer J. Adler

We shouldn't teach great books; we should teach a love of reading.

—B. F. Skinner

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

Information is doubling every 900 days...It takes about 10 years to get a textbook into print...Next, a school review committee spends two years evaluating the book...Finally the school adopts a brand new 12-year old book...and the students use it for five to seven years...How can a student keep current by reading a 19-year old book?

--William Banach

Erudition—dust shaken out of a book into an empty skull.

—Ambrose Bierce

There is no less wit nor invention in applying rightly a thought one finds in a book than in being the first author of that thought.

—Pierre Bayle

I conceive that a knowledge of books is the basis on which all other knowledge rests.

--George Washington

You must go to the school or to the books or on the field because knowledge doesn't come to you, you must go to the knowledge.

—Amit Kalantri

It is wonderful that even today, with all the competition of records, of radio, of television, of motion pictures, the book, has kept its precious character.

A book is somehow sacred. A dictator can kill and maim people, can sink to any kind of tyranny and only be hated, but when books are burned the ultimate in tyranny has happened. This we cannot forgive....

People...automatically believe in books. This is strange but it is so. Messages come from behind the controlled and censored areas of the world and they do not ask for radios, for papers and pamphlets. They invariably ask for books. They believe books when they believe nothing else.

—John Steinbeck

Observation more than books, experience rather than persons, are the prime educators.

--A. B. Alcott

In truth man is made rather to eat ices than to pore over old texts.

--Anatole France

Experience is the child of Thought, and Thought is the child of Action. We cannot learn men from books.

--Benjamin Disraeli

Learning is acquired by reading books; but the much more necessary learning, the knowledge of the world, is only to be acquired by reading men, and studying all the various editions of them.

--Lord Chesterfield

It is the vice of scholars to suppose that there is no knowledge in the world but that of books.

--William Hazlitt

A scholar is someone who owns more hard-cover books than paperbacks.

--Howard Noel

I don't believe anybody can really grasp everything that's even in one textbook.

—Joshua Lederberg

Books are delightful society. If you go onto a room and find it full of books—even without taking them from the shelves they seem to speak to you, to bid you welcome.

—William E. Gladstone

When I've had too much reality, I open a book.

—Unknown

Books: Food for the Brain.

—Slogan

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

—Unknown

Always read something that will make you look good if you die in the middle of it.

—P. J. O'Rourke

It is pleasanter to eat one's own peas out of one's own garden, than to buy them by the peck at Covent Garden; and a book reads the better, which is our own, and has been so long known to us, that we know the topography of its blots and dog's-ears, and can trace the dirt in it to having read it at tea with buttered muffins, or over a pipe.

—Charles Lamb

My test of a good novel is dreading to begin the last chapter.

—Thomas Helm

The smallest bookstore still contains more ideas of worth than have been presented in the entire history of television.

—Andrew Ross

In the attic Christie was discovered lying dressed upon her bed, asleep or suffocated by the smoke that filled the room. A book had slipped from her hand, and in falling had upset the candle on a chair beside her.... 'I forbade her to keep the gas lighted so late, and see what the deceitful creature has done with her private candle!' cried Mrs. Stuart.... 'Look at her!... She has been at the wine, or lost her wits.... She is too fond of books, and it has turned her brain.'

—Louisa May Alcott

The books that help you most are those which make you think the most. The hardest way of learning is that of easy reading; but a great book that comes from a great thinker is a ship of thought, deep freighted with truth and beauty.

—Pablo Neruda

It is not enough to have books, or to know where to read up for information when we want it. Practical wisdom for the purposes of life must be carried about with us, and be ready for use at call. It is not enough that we have a fund laid up at home, but not a farthing in our pocket: we must carry about with us a store of the current coin of knowledge ready for exchange on all occasions, else we are helpless when the opportunity for action occurs. The experience gathered from books is of the nature of learning; the experience gained from actual life is of the nature of wisdom; and a small store of the latter is worth vastly more than any stock of the former.

—Samuel Smiles

Wisdom is not wisdom when it derives from books alone.

--Horace

A surprising number of people—including many students of literature—will tell you they haven't really lived in a book since they were children. Sadly, being taught literature often destroys the life of the books.

—A. S. Byatt

The Internet's impact is immense. My students can't imagine ever paying for a book.

—Edmund White

Once you're out of the classroom, you might vow never to open another book, after being force-fed their contents for so many years. But know this: Books are the most worthy companions to take with you on this bitter-sweet journey known as life.

—Cassandra King

A homeless man visited my store today. The few quarters that he had in his pocket he invested on books. I offered him free books, but he insisted on giving me his quarters. He walked away filled with joy as if he possessed the world's riches in his hands. In a way, he did. He left me smiling and knowing that he was wealthier than many others...

—Besa Kosova

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

It had been startling and disappointing to me to find out that story books had been written by people, that books were not natural wonders, coming up of themselves like grass. Yet regardless of where they come from, I cannot remember a time when I was not in love with them—with the books themselves, cover and binding and the paper they were printed on, with their smell and their weight and with their possession in my arms, captured and carried off to myself. Still illiterate, I was ready for them, committed to all the reading I could give them ...

—Eudora Welty

A book is a device to ignite the imagination.

—Alan Bennett

What kind of life can you have in a house without books?

—Sherman Alexie

Books can be dangerous. The best ones should be labeled ‘This could change your life.’

—Helen Exley

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

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

—Lailah Gifty Akita

To be better equipped for the tests that the year will bring—read a textbook. To prepare for the tests that life will bring—read a book.

—Mokokoma  
Mokhonoana

Freelancing did teach me some of the most important lessons of my professional career: How to dig deep into the work that matters amidst heaps of laundry, bills, and that nagging rainy-day feeling that sidles up and whispers: Wouldn't you rather be curled up with a book? (Children have neighbors asking if they can stop chores and come out to play; writers have books.)

—Nicki Porter



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

—Leo Buscaglia

Books and school are great for learning but there is no substitute for life and living to provide a real education.

—Ken Poirot

The person, be it gentleman or lady, who has not pleasure in a good novel, must be intolerably stupid.

—Jane Austen

Good friends, good books, and a sleepy conscience: this is the ideal life.

—Mark Twain

If you only read the books that everyone else is reading, you can only think what everyone else is thinking.

—Haruki Murakami

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

A mind needs books as a sword needs a whetstone, if it is to keep its edge.

—George R.R. Martin

Instead of letting books grow moldy behind an iron grating, far from the vulgar gaze, it is better to let them wear out by being read.

--Jules Verne

Books open your mind, broaden your mind, and strengthen you as nothing else can.

—William Feather

I can never read all the books I want; I can never be all the people I want and live all the lives I want. I can never train myself in all the skills I want. And why do I want? I want to live and feel all the shades, tones and variations of mental and physical experience possible in my life. And I am horribly limited.

—Sylvia Plath

In a good bookroom you feel in some mysterious way that you are absorbing the wisdom contained in all the books through your skin, without even opening them.

—Mark Twain

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.  
Then fill the shelves with lots of books.

—Roald Dahl

There are worse crimes than burning books. One of them is not reading them.

—Joseph Brodsky

I spent my life folded between the pages of books.

In the absence of human relationships I formed bonds with paper characters. I lived love and loss through stories threaded in history; I experienced adolescence by association. My world is one interwoven web of words, stringing limb to limb, bone to sinew, thoughts and images all together. I am a being comprised of letters, a character created by sentences, a figment of imagination formed through fiction.

—Tahereh Mafi

A book, too, can be a star, a living fire to lighten the darkness, leading out into the expanding universe.

—Madeleine L'Engle

If a book about failures doesn't sell, is it a success?

—Jerry Seinfeld

There is no mistaking a real book when one meets it. It is like falling in love.

—Christopher Morley

Isn't it odd how much fatter a book gets when you've read it several times?... As if something were left between the pages every time you read it. Feelings, thoughts, sounds, smells...and then, when you look at the book again many years later, you find yourself there, too, a slightly younger self, slightly different, as if the book had preserved you like a pressed flower...both strange and familiar.

—Cornelia Funke

Many a book is like a key to unknown chambers within the castle of one's own self.

—Franz Kafka

I love books, by the way, way more than movies. Movies tell you what to think. A good book lets you choose a few thoughts for yourself. Movies show you the pink house. A good book tells you there's a pink house and lets you paint some of the finishing touches, maybe choose the roof style, park your own car out front. My imagination has always topped anything a movie could come up with. Case in point, those darned Harry Potter movies. That was so not what that part-Veela-chick, Fleur Delacour, looked like.

—Karen Marie Moning

A childhood without books – that would be no childhood. That would be like being shut out from the enchanted place where you can go and find the rarest kind of joy.

—Astrid Lindgren

I had already found that it was not good to be alone, and so made companionship with what there was around me, sometimes with the universe and sometimes with my own insignificant self; but my books were always my friends, let fail all else.

—Joshua Slocum

'Have you really read all those books in your room?'

Alaska laughing- 'Oh God no. I've maybe read a third of 'em. But I'm going to read them all. I call it my Life's Library. Every summer since I was little, I've gone to garage sales and bought all the books that looked interesting. So I always have something to read.'

—John Green

I lived in books more than I lived anywhere else.

—Neil Gaiman

Once you have read a book you care about, some part of it is always with you.

—Louis L'Amour

Books are no more threatened by Kindle than stairs by elevators.

—Stephen Fry

Book collecting is an obsession, an occupation, a disease, an addiction, a fascination, an absurdity, a fate. It is not a hobby. Those who do it must do it. Those who do not do it, think of it as a cousin of stamp collecting, a sister of the trophy cabinet, bastard of a sound bank account and a weak mind.

—Jeanette Winterson

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

Books to the ceiling,  
Books to the sky,  
My pile of books is a mile high.  
How I love them! How I need them!  
I'll have a long beard by the time I read them.

—Arnold Lobel

People disappear when they die. Their voice, their laughter, the warmth of their breath. Their flesh. Eventually their bones. All living memory of them ceases. This is both dreadful and natural. Yet for some there is an exception to this annihilation. For in the books they write they continue to exist. We can rediscover them. Their humor, their tone of voice, their moods. Through the written word they can anger you or make you happy. They can comfort you. They can perplex you. They can alter you. All this, even though they are dead. Like flies in amber, like corpses frozen in the ice, that which according to the laws of nature should pass away is, by the miracle of ink on paper, preserved. It is a kind of magic.

—Diane Setterfield

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

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

It is only a novel... or, in short, only some work in which the greatest powers of the mind are displayed, in which the most thorough knowledge of human nature, the happiest delineation of its varieties, the liveliest effusions of wit and humour, are conveyed to the world in the best-chosen language.

—Jane Austen

I still love books. Nothing a computer can do can compare to a book. You can't really put a book on the Internet. Three companies have offered to put books by me on the Net, and I said, 'If you can make something that has a nice jacket, nice paper with that nice smell, then we'll talk.' All the computer can give you is a manuscript. People don't want to read manuscripts. They want to read books. Books smell good. They look good. You can press it to your bosom. You can carry it in your pocket.

—Ray Bradbury

I love books. I like that the moment you open one and sink into it you can escape from the world, into a story that's way more interesting than yours will ever be.

—Elizabeth Scott

I love e-books. I can carry the complete works of William Shakespeare around with me all the time. Just think about that. Whether I'm on an airplane or wherever. Being able to have a library in your back pocket basically is something I support.

—Steve Earle

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

—Malcolm X

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

This book taught me, once and for all, how easily you can escape this world with the help of words! You can find friends between the pages of a book, wonderful friends.

—Cornelia Funke

She read books as one would breathe air, to fill up and live.

—Annie Dillard

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

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

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

As the hours crept by, the afternoon sunlight bleached all the books on the shelves to pale, gilded versions of themselves and warmed the paper and ink inside the covers so that the smell of unread words hung in the air.

—Maggie Stiefvater

I have always been a reader; I have read at every stage of my life, and there has never been a time when reading was not my greatest joy. And yet I cannot pretend that the reading I have done in my adult years matches in its impact on my soul the reading I did as a child. I still believe in stories. I still forget myself when I am in the middle of a good book. Yet it is not the same. Books are, for me, it must be said, the most important thing; what I cannot forget is that there was a time when they were at once more banal and more essential than that. When I was a child, books were everything. And so there is in me, always, a nostalgic yearning for the lost pleasure of books. It is not a yearning that one ever expects to be fulfilled.

—Diane Setterfield

All the books we own, both read and unread, are the fullest expression of self we have at our disposal. ... But with each passing year, and with each whimsical purchase, our libraries become more and more able to articulate who we are, whether we read the books or not.

—Nick Hornby

Without words, without writing and without books there would be no history, there could be no concept of humanity.

—Hermann Hesse

Luckily, I always travel with a book, just in case I have to wait on line for Santa, or some such inconvenience.

—David Levithan

When I am attacked by gloomy thoughts, nothing helps me so much as running to my books. They quickly absorb me and banish the clouds from my mind.

—Michel de Montaigne

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 two persons ever read the same book.

—Edmund Wilson

When writers die they become books, which is, after all, not too bad an incarnation.

—Jorge Luis Borges

What refuge is there for the victim who is oppressed with the feeling that there are a thousand new books he ought to read, while life is only long enough for him to attempt to read a hundred?

—Oliver Wendell  
Holmes Sr.

We are the people of the book. We love our books. We fill our houses with books. We treasure books we inherit from our parents, and we cherish the idea of passing those books on to our children. Indeed, how many of us started reading with a beloved book that belonged to one of our parents? We force worthy books on our friends, and we insist that they read them. We even feel a weird kinship for the people we see on buses or airplanes reading our books, the books that we claim. If anyone tries to take away our books—some oppressive government, some censor gone off the rails—we would defend them with everything that we have. We know our tribespeople when we visit their homes because every wall is lined with books. There are teetering piles of books beside the bed and on the floor; there are masses of swollen paperbacks in the bathroom. Our books are us. They are our outboard memory banks and they contain the moral, intellectual, and imaginative influences that make us the people we are today.

—Cory Doctorow

When I open them, most of the books have the smell of an earlier time leaking out between the pages—a special odor of the knowledge and emotions that for ages have been calmly resting between the covers. Breathing it in, I glance through a few pages before returning each book to its shelf.

—Haruki Murakami

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

When Suzie introduced Helen, she told the audience that one of the best things about books is that they are an interactive art form: that while the author may describe in some detail how a character looks, it is the reader’s imagination that completes the image, making it his or her own. ‘That’s why we so often don’t like movies made from books, right?’ Suzie said. ‘We don’t like someone else’s interpretation of what we see so clearly.’ She talked, too, about how books educate and inspire, and how they soothe the soul—‘like comfort food without the calories,’ she said. She talked about the tactile joys of reading, the feel of a page beneath one’s fingers; the elegance of typeface on a page. She talked about how people complain that they don’t have time to read, and reminded them that if they gave up half an hour of television a day in favor of reading, they could finish twenty-five books a year. ‘Books don’t take time away from us,’ she said. ‘They give it back. In this age of abstraction, of multitasking, of speed for speed’s sake, they reintroduce us to the elegance-and the relief!-of real, tick-tock time.’

—Elizabeth Berg

It’s a rare book that wins the battle against drooping eyelids.

—Tracy Chevalier

Books may look like nothing more than words on a page, but they are actually an infinitely complex imaginotransference technology that translates odd, inky squiggles into pictures inside your head.

—Jasper Fforde



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

There is no scent so pleasant to my nostrils as that faint, subtle reek which comes from an ancient book.

—Arthur Conan Doyle

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

—Allan Bloom

The book itself is a curious artifact, not showy in its technology but complex and extremely efficient: a really neat little device, compact, often very pleasant to look at and handle, that can last decades, even centuries. It doesn't have to be plugged in, activated, or performed by a machine; all it needs is light, a human eye, and a human mind. It is not one of a kind, and it is not ephemeral. It lasts. It is reliable. If a book told you something when you were fifteen, it will tell it to you again when you're fifty, though you may understand it so differently that it seems you're reading a whole new book.

—Ursula K. Le Guin

A book lying idle on a shelf is wasted ammunition. Like money, books must be kept in constant circulation... A book is not only a friend, it makes friends for you. When you have possessed a book with mind and spirit, you are enriched. But when you pass it on you are enriched threefold.

—Henry Miller

You forget everything. The hours slip by. You travel in your chair through centuries you seem 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

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

She breathed deeply of the scent of decaying fiction, disintegrating history, and forgotten verse, and she observed for the first time that a room full of books smelled like dessert: a sweet snack made of figs, vanilla, glue, and cleverness.

—Joe Hill

For books are more than books, they are the life, the very heart and core of ages past, the reason why men worked and died, the essence and quintessence of their lives.

—Marcus Tullius Cicero

She closed the book and put her cheek against it. There was still an odor of a library on it, of dust, leather, binding glue, and old paper, one book carrying the smell of hundreds.

—Shannon Hale

Books - the best antidote against the marsh-gas of boredom and vacuity.

—George Steiner

I wanted to crawl in between those black lines of print, the way you crawl through a fence, and go to sleep under that beautiful big green fig-tree.

—Sylvia Plath

The book is a film that takes place in the mind of the reader. That's why we go to movies and say, 'Oh, the book is better.'

—Paulo Coelho

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

Books and doors are the same thing. You open them, and you go through into another world.

—Jeanette Winterson

There was another reason [she] took her books whenever they went away. They were her home when she was somewhere strange. They were familiar voices, friends that never quarreled with her, clever, powerful friends -- daring and knowledgeable, tried and tested adventurers who had traveled far and wide. Her books cheered her up when she was sad and kept her from being bored.

—Cornelia Funke

I fell in love with books. Some people find beauty in music, some in painting, some in landscape, but I find it in words. By beauty, I mean the feeling you have suddenly glimpsed another world, or looked into a portal that reveals a kind of magic or romance out of which the world has been constructed, a feeling there is something more than the mundane, and a reason for our plodding.

—Donald Miller

Few pleasures, for the true reader, rival the pleasure of browsing unhurriedly among books: old books, new books, library books, other people's books, one's own books—it does not matter whose or where. Simply to be among books, glancing at one here, reading a page from one over there, enjoying them all as objects to be touched, looked at, even smelt, is a deep satisfaction. And often, very often, while browsing haphazardly, looking for nothing in particular, you pick up a volume that suddenly excites you, and you know that this one of all the others you must read. Those are great moments—and the books we come across like that are often the most memorable.

—Aidan Chambers

Among the many worlds which man did not receive as a gift of nature, but which he created with his own mind, the world of books is the greatest. Every child, scrawling his first letters on his slate and attempting to read for the first time, in so doing, enters an artificial and complicated world; to know the laws and rules of this world completely and to practice them perfectly, no single human life is long enough. Without words, without writing, and without books there would be no history, there could be no concept of humanity. And if anyone wants to try to enclose in a small space in a single house or single room, the history of the human spirit and to make it his own, he can only do this in the form of a collection of books.

—Hermann Hesse

Those aren't books. You can't hold a computer in your hand like you can a book. A computer does not smell. There are two perfumes to a book. If a book is new, it smells great. If a book is old, it smells even better. It smells like ancient Egypt. A book has got to smell. You have to hold it in your hands and pray to it. You put it in your pocket and you walk with it. And it stays with you forever. But the computer doesn't do that for you. I'm sorry.

—Ray Bradbury

A good book is never exhausted. It goes on whispering to you from the wall. Books perfume and give weight to a room. A bookcase is as good as a view, as the sight of a city or a river. There are dawns and sunsets in books - storms, fogs, zephyrs. I read about a family whose apartment consists of a series of spaces so strictly planned that they are obliged to give away their books as soon as they've read them. I think they have misunderstood the way books work. Reading a book is only the first step in the relationship. After you've finished it, the book enters on its real career. It stand there as a badge, a blackmailer, a monument, a scar. It's both a flaw in the room, like a crack in the plaster, and a decoration. The contents of someone's bookcase are part of his history, like an ancestral portrait.

—Anatole Broyard

I smiled at the stacks, inhaling again. Hundreds of thousands of pages that had never been turned, waiting for me. The shelves were a warm, blond wood, piled with spines of every color. Staff picks were arranged on tables, glossy covers reflecting the light back at me. Behind the little cubby where the cashier sat, ignoring us, stairs covered with rich burgundy carpet led up to the worlds unknown. 'I could just live here,' I said.

—Maggie Stiefvater

The Bookshop has a thousand books,  
All colors, hues, and tinges,  
And every cover is a door  
That turns on magic hinges.

—Nancy Byrd Turner

That's the thing about a great book. Every time you read it, it's different, because you're different. You've changed since the last time you picked it up, things have happened to you.

—Jessica Zafra

A book is an arrangement of twenty-six phonetic symbols, ten numerals, and about eight punctuation marks, and people can cast their eyes over these and envision the eruption of Mount Vesuvius or the Battle of Waterloo.

—Kurt Vonnegut

## A BOOK

'Now' - said a good book unto me -  
'Open my pages and you shall see  
Jewels of wisdom and treasures fine,  
Gold and silver in every line,  
And you may claim them if you but will  
Open my pages and take your fill.

'Open my pages and run them o'er,  
Take what you choose of my golden store.  
Be you greedy, I shall not care -  
All that you seize I shall gladly spare;  
There is never a lock on my treasure doors,  
Come - here are my jewels, make them yours!

'I am just a book on your mantel shelf,  
But I can be part of your living self;  
If only you'll travel my pages through,  
Then I will travel the world with you.  
As two wines blended make better wine,  
Blend your mind with these truths of mine.

'I'll make you fitter to talk with men,  
I'll touch with silver the lines you pen,  
I'll lead you nearer the truth you seek,  
I'll strengthen you when your faith grows weak -  
This place on your shelf is a prison cell,  
Let me come into your mind to dwell!

—Edgar A. Guest

Books, for me, are a home. Books don't make a home—they are one, in the sense that just as you do with a door, you open a book, and you go inside. Inside there is a different kind of time and space. There is warmth there too—a hearth. I sit down with a book and I am warm.

—Jeanette Winterson

For the last several days I've had the sudden and general urge to buy a new book. I've stopped off at a few bookstores around the city, and while I've looked at hundreds and hundreds of books in that time, I have not found the one book that will satisfy my urge. It's not as if I don't have anything to read; there's a tower of perfectly good unread books next to my bed, not to mention the shelves of books in the living room I've been meaning to reread. I find myself, maddeningly, hungry for the next one, as yet unknown. I no longer try to analyze this hunger; I capitulated long ago to the book lust that's afflicted me most of my life. I know enough about the course of the disease to know I'll discover something soon.

—Lewis Buzbee

Buying a book is not about obtaining a possession, but about securing a portal.

—Laura Miller

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

Printer's ink has been running a race against gunpowder these many, many years. Ink is handicapped, in a way, because you can blow up a man with gunpowder in half a second, while it may take twenty years to blow him up with a book. But the gunpowder destroys itself along with its victim, while a book can keep on exploding for centuries.

—Christopher Morley

If the self-help books worked, it would be a shrinking industry not a growing one.

—Steve Maraboli

**What a blessing** it is to love books. Everybody must love something, and I know of no objects of love that give such substantial and unfailing returns as books and a garden.

—Elizabeth von Arnim

The wonderful thing about books is that they allow us to enter imaginatively into someone else's life. And when we do that, we learn to sympathize with other people. But the real surprise is that we also learn truths about ourselves, about our own lives, that somehow we hadn't been able to see before.

—Katherine Paterson

A well-composed book is a magic carpet on which we are wafted to a world that we cannot enter in any other way.

—Caroline Gordon

A great book is a homing device  
For navigating paradise.

A good book somehow makes you care  
About the comfort of a chair.

A bad book owes to many trees  
A forest of apologies.

—J. Patrick Lewis

My fingers positively itched to drift at length along their spines, to arrive at one whose lure I could not pass, to pluck it down, to inch it open, then to close my eyes and inhale the soul-sparking scent of old and literate dust.

—Kate Morton

The books we read help to shape who we are. Reading offers us, as children, our first independence- allowing us to travel far beyond the confines of our immediate world. Books introduce us to great figures in history, narratives that stir our spirit, fictions that tug us out of ourselves and into the lives of a thousand others, and visions of every era through which human beings have lived. And in the process of stretching who we are, books also connect us to all others- of our own or previous times- who have read what we've read. In the community of readers, we instantly become linked to those who share our love for specific characters or passages.

—Ben Jacobs

The books—the generous friends who met me without suspicion—the merciful masters who never used me ill! The only years of my life that I can look back on with something like pride... Early and late, through the long winter nights and the quiet summer days, I drank at the fountain of knowledge, and never wearied of the draught.

—Wilkie Collins

I love the book. I love the feel of a book in my hands, the compactness of it, the shape, the size. I love the feel of paper. The sound it makes when I turn a page. I love the beauty of print on paper, the patterns, the shapes, the fonts. I am astonished by the versatility and practicality of *The Book*. It is so simple. It is so fit for its purpose. It may give me mere content, but no e-reader will ever give me that sort of added pleasure.

—Susan Hill

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

If you've ever read one of those articles that asks notable people to list their favorite books, you may have been impressed or daunted to see them pick Proust or Thomas Mann or James Joyce. You might even feel sheepish about the fact that you reread *Pride and Prejudice* or *The Lord of the Rings*, or *The Catcher in the Rye* or *Gone With the Wind* every couple of years with some much pleasure. Perhaps, like me, you're even a little suspicious of their claims, because we all know that the books we've loved best are seldom the ones we esteem the most highly—or the ones we'd most like other people to think we read over and over again.

—Laura Miller

An honest bookstore would post the following sign above its 'self-help' section: 'For true self-help, please visit our philosophy, literature, history and science sections, find yourself a good book, read it, and think about it.'

—Roger Ebert

Last night I thought about all the kerosene I've used in the past ten years. And I thought about books. And for the first time I realized that a man was behind each one of the books. A man had to think them up. A man had to take a long time to put them down on paper. And I'd never even thought that thought before...It took some man a lifetime maybe to put some of his thoughts down, looking around at the world and life, and then I come along in two minutes and boom! it's all over.

—Ray Bradbury

The venerable dead are waiting in my library to entertain me and relieve me from the nonsense of surviving mortals.

—Samuel Davies

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

—John Witherspoon



I couldn't get to sleep. The book lay nearby. A thin object on the divan. So strange. Between two cardboard covers were noises, doors, howls, horses, people. All side by side, pressed tightly against one another. Boiled down to little black marks. Hair, eyes, voices, nails, legs, knocks on doors, walls, blood, beards, the sound of horse-shoes, shouts. All docile, blindly obedient to the little black marks. The letters run in mad haste, now here, now there. The a's, f's, y's, k's all run. They gather together to create a horse or a hailstorm. They run again. Now they create a dagger, a night, a murder. Then streets, slamming doors, silence. Running and running. Never stopping.

—Ismail Kadare

Steadily, the room shrank, till the book thief could touch the shelves within a few small steps. She ran the back of her hand along the first shelf, listening to the shuffle of her fingernails gliding across the spinal cord of each book. It sounded like an instrument, or the notes of running feet. She used both hands. She raced them. One shelf against the other. And she laughed. Her voice was sprawled out, high in her throat, and when she eventually stopped and stood in the middle of the room, she spent many minutes looking from the shelves to her fingers and back again.

How many books had she touched?

How many had she felt?

She walked over and did it again, this time much slower, with her hand facing forward, allowing the dough of her palm to feel the small hurdle of each book. It felt like magic, like beauty, as bright lines of light shone down from a chandelier. Several times, she almost pulled a title from its place but didn't dare disturb them. They were too perfect.

—Markus Zusak

When a book leaves its author's desk it changes. Even before anyone has read it, before eyes other than its creator's have looked upon a single phrase, it is irretrievably altered. It has become a book that can be read, that no longer belongs to its maker. It has acquired, in a sense, free will. It will make its journey through the world and there is no longer anything the author can do about it. Even he, as he looks at its sentences, reads them differently now that they can be read by others. They look like different sentences. The book has gone out into the world and the world has remade it.

—Salman Rushdie

Madam Pince, our librarian, tells me that it is ‘pawed about, dribbled on, and generally maltreated’ nearly everyday—a high compliment for any book.

—J. K. Rowling

Handle a book as a bee does a flower, extract its sweetness but do not damage it.

—John Muir

If your friend wishes to read your ‘*Plutarch’s Lives*,’ ‘Shakespeare,’ or ‘*The Federalist Papers*,’ tell him gently but firmly, to buy a copy. You will lend him your car or your coat - but your books are as much a part of you as your head or your heart.

—Mortimer J. Adler

In Tereza’s eyes, books were the emblems of a secret brotherhood. For she had but a single weapon against the world of crudity surrounding her: the novels. She had read any number of them, from Fielding to Thomas Mann. They not only offered the possibility of an imaginary escape from a life she found unsatisfying; they also had a meaning for her as physical objects: she loved to walk down the street with a book under her arm. It had the same significance for her as an elegant cane from the dandy a century ago. It differentiated her from others.

—Milan Kundera

If a book did nothing else for you, other than to save you from the company of other people; if all it did was to deliver you from their gossip, and their dull affairs, and their appalling manners, and their rotten Arabic, and their stupid ideas, and their woefully misguided opinions, and above all, from the need to be polite to them; if a book did nothing more than that, it would still be the best friend you ever had.

—Andrew Killeen

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

Books have survived television, radio, talking pictures, circulars (early magazines), dailies (early newspapers), Punch and Judy shows, and Shakespeare’s plays. They have survived World War II, the Hundred Years’ War, the Black Death, and the fall of the Roman Empire. They even survived the Dark Ages, when almost no one could read and each book had to be copied by hand. They aren’t going to be killed off by the Internet.

—Vicki Myron

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

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

—Alan Bennett

The e-reading revolution may have reached our shores this year but it has yet to reckon with Australia's summer holidays. Intense sunlight plays havoc with screens and the sand invades every nook and cranny, so as convenient and sexy as your new iPad may be, the battered paperback, its pages pocked and swollen from contact with briny hands, will likely remain the beach format of choice for a few years yet.

—Geordie Williamson

The book and I secret ourselves  
Behind the paneled door.  
We merge our thoughts in retrospect  
Of ancient mystic lore.

We spend a pleasant quiet hour,  
Nor know it passed us by...  
The easy chair, the shaded lamp,  
A well-loved book and I.

—Edna Moore Schultz

There is nothing more wonderful than a book. It may be a message to us from the dead, from human souls we never saw who lived perhaps thousands of miles away, and yet these little sheets of paper speak to us, arouse us, teach us, open our hearts and in turn open their hearts to us like brothers. Without books, God is silent, justice dormant, philosophy lame.

—Charles Kingsley

I do not believe that all books will or should migrate onto screens: as Douglas Adams once pointed out to me, more than 20 years before the Kindle showed up, a physical book is like a shark. Sharks are old: there were sharks in the ocean before the dinosaurs. And the reason there are still sharks around is that sharks are better at being sharks than anything else is. Physical books are tough, hard to destroy, bath-resistant, solar-operated, feel good in your hand: they are good at being books, and there will always be a place for them.

—Neil Gaiman

In literature, the reader standing at the threshold of the end of a book harbors no illusion that the end has not come—he or she can see where it finishes, the abyss the other side of the last chunk of text. Which means that the writer is never in danger of ending too soon—or if he does the reader has been so forewarned. This is the advantage a book has over a film—it is the brain that marshals forward the text and controls the precise moment of conclusion of the book, as the density of the pages thins. A film can end without you if you've fallen asleep or, because you can't wait any longer to use the bathroom, slipped out of the darkness of the theatre salon, and missed it. There will never be a form more perfect than the book, which always moves at your pace, that sits waiting for you exactly where you've left it and never goes on without you.

—John M. Keller

I hope I will never have a life that is not surrounded by books, by books that are bound in paper and cloth and glue, such perishable things for ideas that have lasted thousands of years, or just since the most recent Harry Potter. I hope I am always walled in by the very weight and breadth and clumsy, inefficient, antiquated bulk of them, hope I spend my last days on this Earth arranging and rearranging them on thrones of good, honest pine, oak, and mahogany, because they just feel good in my hands, because I just like to look at their covers, and dream of the promise of the great stories inside.

—Rick Bragg

Books are as useful to a stupid person as a mirror is useful to a blind person.

—Chanakya

'I love being single. It's my choice, not a sentence. It's not a state that I'm in until someone better comes along. Don't feel sorry for me. I love my life.'

'Don't you want someone to snuggle up to at night?'

'No. this way, I never have to fight for the duvet, I can sleep diagonally across the bed and I can read until four in the morning.'

'A book can't take the place of a man!'

'I disagree. A book can give you most things a relationship can. It can make you laugh, it can make you cry, it can transport you to different worlds and teach you things. You can even take it out to dinner. And if it bores you, you can move on. Which is pretty much what happens in real life.'

—Sarah Morgan

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

Books are precious and should be handled gently , 'like butterflies.'

—Jessi Klein

These fragile, worn, faded, thin, cheap paper-bound books. They smelled of dust, and mould, and age. They smelled, faintly, of pee, and tobacco, and spilled coffee. They smelled like things which had lived. They smelled like history.

—Lavie Tidhar

Books are the bees which carry the quickening pollen from one to another mind.

—James Russell Lowell

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

—Jim Fiebig

Sometimes, you read a book and it fills you with this weird evangelical zeal, and you become convinced that the shattered world will never be put back together unless and until all living humans read the book. And then there are books... which you can't tell people about, books so special and rare and yours that advertising your affection feels like a betrayal. It wasn't even that the book was so good or anything; it was just that the author... seemed to understand me in weird and impossible ways.

—John Green

There is also that kind of reading which is just looking at books. From time to time—I can't say what dictates the impulse—I pull a chair up in front of a section of my library. An expectant tranquility settles over me. I move my eyes slowly, reading the spines, or identifying the title by its color and positioning. Just to see my books, to note their presence, their proximity to other books, fills me with a sense of futurity. 'Books,' I once noted grandly, 'embody the spirit's dream of perpetual youth.' What is important at these moments is not the contents of the books, but the idea of their existence. I have not read every one, nor is it likely that I will—but to know that I might!

—Sven Birkerts

Why, then, am I so uneasy about the page-to-screen transfer—a skeptic if not a downright resister? Perhaps it is because I see in the turning of literal pages—pages bound in literal books—a compelling larger value, and perceive in the move away from the book a move away from a certain kind of cultural understanding, one that I'm not confident that we are replacing, never mind improving upon. I'm not blind to the unwieldiness of the book, or to the cumbersome systems we must maintain to accommodate it—the vast libraries and complicated filing systems. But these structures evolved over centuries in ways that map our collective endeavor to understand and express our world. The book is part of a system. And that system stands for the labor and taxonomy of human understanding, and to touch a book is to touch that system, however lightly. The electronic book, on the other hand, represents—and furthers—a circuitry of instant access... We may gain an extraordinary dots-per-square-inch level of access to detail, but in the process we will lose much of our sense of the woven narrative consistency of the story. That is the trade-off. Access versus context.

—Sven Birkerts

As long as a film stays unmade, the book is entirely yours, it belongs to the writer. As soon as you make it into a film, suddenly more people see it than have ever read the book.

—Iain Banks

Old or new, the only sign I always try to rid my books of (usually with little success) is the price-sticker that malignant booksellers attach to the backs. These evil white scabs rip off with difficulty, leaving leprous wounds and traces of slime to which adhere the dust and fluff of ages, making me wish for a special gummy hell to which the inventor of these stickers would be condemned.

—Alberto Manguel

An odour of a book is a complex mixture of odorous volatiles, emitted from different materials from which books are made. Due to the different materials used to make books throughout history, there is no one characteristic odour of old books.... The pleasant aromatic smell is due to aromatic compounds emitted mainly from papers made from ground wood which are characterised by their yellowish-brown colour. They emit vanilla-like, sweetly fragrant vanillin, aromatic anisol and benzaldehyde, with fruity almond-like odor. On the other hand, terpene compounds, deriving from rosin, which is used to make paper more impermeable to inks, contribute to the camphorous, oily and woody smell of books. A mushroom odour is caused by some other, intensely fragrant aliphatic alcohols.

—Jana Kolar

Browsing the dim back corner  
Of a musty antique shop  
Opened an old book of poetry  
Angels flew out from the pages  
I caught the whiff of a soul  
The ink seemed fresh as today  
Was that voices whispering?  
The tree of the paper still grows.

—Terri Guillemets

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

If you're offering three books to a boy, for example, let one of them be about a girl, written by a woman, with no caveats. That will let him know you don't think there's anything shameful in empathizing with a female character. If, for example, you've ever assumed that books about black teens are only for other black teens and not your mostly white student body, I'd ask you to question that. I'd ask you to think about books as both mirrors and doors, and allow all kids access to both. Celebrate stories of all kinds.

—Shannon Hale

Reading a book with a main character who reflects you is such an amazing experience, especially for a kid who never felt represented in a book before. Books should be mirrors! But they should also be doors. Reading is one of the most profound ways to gain real empathy for people who are different from us. If we're only giving kids stories about people like them, we're missing a huge opportunity to help them gain empathy, to understand and care about others. If boys don't grow up learning empathy for 50 percent of the human race how successful can we expect them to be in life?

—Shannon Hale

Three films a day, three books a week and records of great music would be enough to make me happy to the day I die.

—François Truffaut

Why pay a dollar for a bookmark? Why not use the dollar for a bookmark?

—Steven Spielberg

Books and movies, they are not mere entertainment. They sustain me and help me cope with my real life.

—Arlaina Tibensky



I know every book of mine by its smell, and I have but to put my nose between the pages to be reminded of all sorts of things.

—George Gissing

When I was a child, when I was an adolescent, books saved me from despair: that convinced me that culture was the highest of values.

—Simone de Beauvoir

I suggest that the only books that influence us are those for which we are ready, and which have gone a little further down our particular path than we have yet gone ourselves.

—E. M. Forster

Books may not change our suffering, books may not protect us from evil, books may not tell us what is good or what is beautiful, and they will certainly not shield us from the common fate of the grave. But books grant us myriad possibilities: the possibility of change, the possibility of illumination.

—Alberto Manguel

I believe that today more than ever a book should be sought after even if it has only one great page in it. We must search for fragments, splinters, toenails, anything that has ore in it, anything that is capable of resuscitating the body and the soul.

—Henry Miller

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

Until then I had thought each book spoke of the things, human or divine, that lie outside books. Now I realized that not infrequently books speak of books: it is as if they spoke among themselves. In the light of this reflection, the library seemed all the more disturbing to me. It was then the place of a long, centuries-old murmuring, an imperceptible dialogue between one parchment and another, a living thing, a receptacle of powers not to be ruled by a human mind, a treasure of secrets emanated by many minds, surviving the death of those who had produced them or had been their conveyors.

—Umberto Eco

I was raised among books, making invisible friends in pages that seemed cast from dust and whose smell I carry on my hands to this day.

—Carlos Ruiz Zafón

Of course anyone who truly loves books buys more of them than he or she can hope to read in one fleeting lifetime. A good book, resting unopened in its slot on a shelf, full of majestic potentiality, is the most comforting sort of intellectual wallpaper.

—David Quammen

I had found my religion: nothing seemed more important to me than a book. I saw the library as a temple.

—Jean-Paul Sartre

Do you know why books such as this are so important? Because they have quality. And what does the word quality mean? To me it means texture. This book has pores. It has features. This book can go under the microscope. You'd find life under the glass, streaming past in infinite profusion. The more pores, the more truthfully recorded details of life per square inch you can get on a sheet of paper, the more 'literary' you are. That's my definition anyway. Telling detail. Fresh detail. The good writers touch life often. The mediocre ones run a quick hand over her. The bad ones rape her and leave her for the flies. So now you see why books are hated and feared? They show the pores in the face of life.

—Ray Bradbury

The true birthplace is that wherein for the first time one looks intelligently upon oneself; my first homelands have been books, and to a lesser degree schools.

—Marguerite Yourcenar

Time is a river...and books are boats. Many volumes start down that stream, only to be wrecked and lost beyond recall in its sands. Only a few, a very few, endure the testings of time and live to bless the ages following.

—Joseph Fort Newton

Here's what I mean by the miracle of language. When you're falling into a good book, exactly as you might fall into a dream, a little conduit opens, a passageway between a reader's heart and a writer's, a connection that transcends the barriers of continents and generations and even death ... And here's the magic. You're different. You can never go back to being exactly the same person you were before you disappeared into that book.

—Anthony Doerr

Stranger, pause and look;  
From the dust of ages  
Lift this little book,  
Turn the tattered pages,  
Read me, do not let me die!  
Search the fading letters finding  
Steadfast in the broken binding  
All that once was I!

—Edna St. Vincent  
Millay

Books, books, books!  
I had found the secret of a garret room  
Piled high with cases in my father's name;  
Piled high, packed large,—where, creeping in and out  
Among the giant fossils of my past,  
Like some small nimble mouse between the ribs  
Of a mastodon, I nibbled here and there  
At this or that box, pulling through the gap,  
In heats of terror, haste, victorious joy,  
The first book first. And how I felt it beat  
Under my pillow, in the morning's dark,  
An hour before the sun would let me read!  
My books!

—Elizabeth Barrett  
Browning

There are books, that one has for twenty years without reading them, that one always keeps at hand, that one takes along from city to city, from country to country, carefully packed, even when there is very little room, and perhaps one leafs through them while removing them from a trunk; yet one carefully refrains from reading even a complete sentence. Then after twenty years, there comes a moment when suddenly, as though under a high compulsion, one cannot help taking in such a book from beginning to end, at one sitting: it is like a revelation. Now one knows why one made such a fuss about it. It had to be with one for a long time; it had to travel; it had to occupy space; it had to be a burden; and now it has reached the goal of its voyage, now it reveals itself, now it illuminates the twenty bygone years it mutely lived with one. It could not say so much if it had not been there mutely the whole time, and what idiot would dare to assert that the same things had always been in it.

—Elias Canetti

Hold a book in your hand and you're a pilgrim at the gates of a new city.

—Anne Michaels

For this quiet, unprepossessing, passive man who has no garden in front of his subsidised flat, books are like flowers. He loves to line them up on the shelf in multicoloured rows: he watches over each of them with an old-fashioned gardener's delight, holds them like fragile objects in his thin, bloodless hands.

—Stefan Zweig

When at last I came upon the right book, the feeling was violent: it blew open a hole in me that made life more dangerous because I couldn't control what came through it.

—Nicole Krauss

Any time Hollywood takes a book and turns it into a successful movie, there's every chance that the book, however good it may be, will be forgotten....Of all the people who have seen Alfred Hitchcock's *The Birds*, how many have read the Daphne du Maurier novella on which the movie is based, much less recognize that in many ways the original is better? How many fans of *Die Hard* know it's based on a good crime novel?...The explanation isn't complicated: more people will go to see a movie on any given Wednesday afternoon than will read the book on which it's based in a year. Almost always, the more successful the movie, the more forgotten the book.

--Malcolm Jones

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

A precious, mouldering pleasure 't is  
To meet an antique book,  
In just the dress his century wore;  
A privilege, I think.

—Emily Dickinson

Many books require no thought from those who read them, and for a very simple reason; they made no such demand upon those who wrote them.

—Charles Caleb Colton

On no days of our childhood did we live so fully perhaps as those we thought we had left behind without living them, those that we spent with a favourite book.

—Marcel Proust

Of all man's instruments, the most wondrous, no doubt, is the book. The other instruments are extensions of his body. The microscope, the telescope, are extensions of his sight; the telephone is the extension of his voice; then we have the plow and the sword, extensions of the arm. But the book is something else altogether: the book is an extension of memory and imagination.

—Jorge Luis Borges

You can't enjoy art or books in a hurry.

—E. A. Bucchianeri

The only important thing in a book is the meaning It has for you.

--W. Somerset Maugham

No man understands a deep book until he has seen and lived at least part of its contents.

--Ezra Pound

Literature has two advantages over wine. A good book ages forever; and you can read it as often as you wish without diminishing its substance. The devoted reader is like a wine lover whose dream has come true. His stock will never spoil or be consumed. He can sample, enjoy, and share his cellar without fear of depleting his reserves; it will grow as he grows. He need never go thirsty.

--Roger Shattuck

As a book-worm I have got so used to lewd and lascivious books that I no longer notice them. The most virtuous lady novelists write things that would have made a bartender blush two decades ago. If I open a new novel and find nothing about copulation in it, I suspect at once that it is simply a reprint of some forgotten novel of 1885, with a new name. When I began reviewing, I used to send my review copies, after I had sweated through them, to the Y.M.C.A. By 1920 I was sending all discarded novels to a medical college.

--H. L. Mencken

More than at any other time, when I hold a beloved book in my hand my limitations fall from me, my spirit is free.

—Helen Keller

For him that stealeth, or borroweth and returneth not, this book from its owner, let it change into a serpent in his hand and rend him. Let him be struck with palsy, and all his members blasted. Let him languish in pain, crying aloud for mercy, and let there be no surcease to this agony till he sing in dissolution. Let bookworms gnaw his entrails...and when at last he goeth to his final punishment, let the flames of Hell consume him forever.

—Anatole Broyard

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

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

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

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

--Ezra Pound

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

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 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

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

—*Child and Youth  
Network Logo*

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

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

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

—Tiffini Johnson

When I was young, I not only liked the pictures and the stories in library books but the feel and the smell of the books themselves.

--Judy Blume

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

A well chosen anthology is a complete dispensary of medicine for the more common mental disorders, and may be used as much for prevention as cure.

--Robert Graves

Baby books bore me....Too stilted. Too bland. Too predictable. Silverstein's poems surprise and amuse. Sly story lines duck down unexpected alleys. Clever phrases squeal and sing. Cuddled in my lap, Alice senses enthusiasm, hears delight. *Sidewalk* entralls Alice because Silverstein entralls me. Baby loves a book not usually shelved with baby books.

—Jack Hamann

Books are not entirely valued or intimately loved unless they are ranged about us as we sit at home.

--Edmund Gosse

Books are a delightful society. If you go into a room filled with books, even without taking them down from their shelves, they seem to speak to you, to welcome you.

--William E. Gladstone

My books are my tools, and the greater their variety and perfection the greater the help to my literary work.

--Tryon Edwards

He was hypnotized by the book in front of him. Other books were spread across the table, like he was taking a bath in books.

--Jerry Spinelli

Books on every topic. With pictures. Without pictures. Hard books. Boring books. Books about submarines. Books about real stuff. Books about made-up stuff. Books that quenched and books that made you thirsty. Books to learn from. Books to grow your mind. Wonderful, wonderful books. That's what the public library gave to millions over all the years.

--Paul Sassone



When a 5-year-old walks into kindergarten, takes a book, and holds it upside down, you know there is no reading readiness there. I heard of many projects like Books for Babies, which is run by the Friends of the Library in tiny Winters, California: volunteers scour birth announcements and go stroller-spotting, offering each new baby a box with a T-shirt, a cap, two books, and an application to join the library.

—Patrick Losinski

The library is not a shrine for the worship of books. It is not a temple where literary incense must be burned or where one's devotion to the bound book is expressed in ritual. A library, to modify the famous metaphor of Socrates, should be the delivery room for the birth of ideas—a place where history comes to life.

—Norman Cousins

English teachers and their students must have freedom to read and see and think and discuss and learn if there is any hope of reality entering the classroom. Where censors grant teacher 'limited' freedom as long as students read only 'wholesome' books and 'uplifting' magazines about 'good' Americans and 'happy' things, view only 'suitable' and 'clean' and 'Christian' films, create only 'optimistic' and 'positive' and 'inspirational' media materials, and discuss only 'noncontroversial' and 'safe' topics, there is no possibility of education and the search for truth, only the indoctrination into the community's contemporary mores.

—Kenneth L. Donelson

Books won't stay banned. They won't burn. Ideas won't go to jail. In the long run of history, the censor and the inquisitor have always lost. The only sure weapon against bad ideas is better ideas. The source of better ideas is wisdom. The surest path to wisdom is a liberal education.

--Alfred Whitney  
Griswold

I never heard of anyone who was really literate or who ever really loved books who wanted to suppress any of them. Censors only read a book with great difficulty, moving their lips as they puzzle out each syllable, when somebody tells them that the book is unfit to read.

--Robertson Davies

I am mortified to be told that, in the United States of America, the sale of a book can become a subject of inquiry, and of criminal inquiry too.

--Thomas Jefferson

The wonderful thing about libraries and bookstores—even the television or the radio—is that no one is forcing you to read anything, or to go to any particular movie, or to watch something on television or listen to something on the radio. You have free choice.

--Judith Krug

To limit the press is to insult a nation; to prohibit reading of certain books is to declare the inhabitants to be either fools or slaves.

--Claude Adrien  
Helvetius

Children have a lot more to worry about from the parents who raised them than from the books they read.

--E. L. Doctorow

When I get a little money, I buy books; and if any is left, I buy food and clothes.

--Desiderius Erasmus

All of the books in the world contain no more information than is broadcast as video in a single large American city in a single year. Not all bits have equal value.

--Carl Sagan

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

Far more effective (than books) is the spoken word. There is something in the voice, the countenance, the bearing, and the gesture of the speaker, that concur in fixing an impression upon the mind, deeper than can even vigorous writings.

--Pliny the Younger

A laugh a day does you more good than an apple – read a humourous book.

—James Minter

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

I do not think I ever opened a book in my life which had not something to say upon woman's inconstancy. Songs and proverbs, all talk of woman's fickleness. But perhaps you will say, these were all written by men.

Perhaps I shall. Yes, yes, if you please, no reference to examples in books. Men have had every advantage of us in telling their own story. Education has been theirs in so much higher a degree; the pen has been in their hands. I will not allow books to prove anything.

—Jane Austen

Quite often somebody will say, What year do your books take place? and the only answer I can give is, In childhood.

—Beverly Cleary

We are what we read—and the power of books to transform the minds and personalities of their readers can give cause for anxiety as well as for celebration.

—Richard Kieckhefer

I have some friends,  
some honest friends,  
and honest friends are few;  
My pipe of briar,  
my open fire,  
A book that's not too new.

—Robert Service

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

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

Our relationship with literary characters, at least to those that exercise a certain attraction over us, rests in fact on a denial. We know perfectly well, on a conscious level, that these characters 'do not exist,' or in any case do not exist in the same way as do the inhabitants of the real world. But things manifest in an entirely different way on the unconscious level, which is interested not in the ontological differences between worlds but in the effect they produce on the psyche.

Every psychoanalyst knows how deeply a subject can be influenced, and even shaped, sometimes to the point of tragedy, by a fictional character and the sense of identification it gives rise to.

—Pierre Bayard

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

—Jayden Hunter

In Berlin, I worked from home, were the only other women sat sedately on my bookshelves. They were good company, it has to be said, but a little quiet.

—Luisa Weiss

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

—Munia Khan

It is chiefly through books that we enjoy intercourse with superior minds. In the best books, great men talk to us, give us their most precious thoughts, and pour their souls into ours.

—William Ellery  
Channing

It's very important that all children are able to be not just entertained, but also that the stories can help them with the challenges in their personal lives.

—Roald Dahl

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

The city that makes it easy for its people to obtain books will develop a citizenship that will be worth all the money it costs.

--Sam Walter Foss

Books like *Twilight* are not art. They are mass-produced crap that is meant to be consumed by the widest possible audience, for the largest possible profit.

—Oliver Gaspirtz

'I love the smell of old books,' Mandy sighed, inhaling deeply with the book pressed against her face. The yellow pages smelled of wood and paper mills and mothballs.

—Rebecca McNutt

Books were a luxury item before the printing press.

—Nate Silver

I guess you can call me 'old fashioned.' I prefer the book with the pages that you can actually turn. Sure, I may have to lick the tip of my fingers so that the pages don't stick together when I'm enraptured in a story that I can't wait to get to the next page. But nothing beats the sound that an actual, physical book makes when you first crack it open or the smell of new, fresh printed words on the creamy white paper of a page turner.

—Felicia Johnson

If you drop a book into the toilet, you can fish it out, dry it off and read that book. But if you drop your Kindle in the toilet, you're pretty well done.

—Stephen King

The most potent recreational activity is when we sit back and exercise our minds with great and exciting books.

—Michael Bassey  
Johnson

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*

Books are something social—a writer speaking to a reader—so I think making the reading of a book the center of a social event, the meeting of a book club, is a brilliant idea.

—Yann Martel

Picking five favorite books is like picking the five body parts you'd most like not to lose.

—Neil Gaiman

If one reads enough books one has a fighting chance. Or better, one's chances of survival increase with each book one reads.

—Sherman Alexie

Always choose the adventure ... unless, it's chilly outside and there's a cup of warm coffee resting near a book and comfy sofa.

--Barbara Brooke

A love of books, of holding a book, turning its pages, looking at its pictures, and living its fascinating stories goes hand-in-hand with a love of learning.

—Laura Bush

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

The most important book I've ever read was the *Autobiography of Malcolm X*, in English class, seventh or eighth grade, at Rothschild Junior High School, Brooklyn. It rocked my world.

—Spike Lee

When it's summer, people sit a lot. Or lie. Lie in the sense of recumbency. A good heavy book holds you down. It's an anchor that keeps you from getting up and having another gin and tonic. Many a person has been saved from summer alcoholism, not to mention hypertoxicity, by Dostoyevsky. Put *The Idiot* in your lap or over your face, and you know where you are going to be for the afternoon.

— Roy Blount Jr.

For as long as she could remember, she had thought that autumn air went well with books, that the two both somehow belonged with blankets, comfortable armchairs, and big cups of coffee or tea.

— Katarina Bivald

'Come with me,' Mom says.  
To the library.  
Books and summertime  
go together.

--Lisa Schroeder

Fear not November's challenge bold—  
We've books and friends,  
And hearths that never can grow cold:  
These make amends!

—Alexander L. Fraser

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

—John Sinor

There are adventures of the spirit and one can travel in books and interest oneself  
in people and affairs. One need never be dull as long as one has friends to help,  
gardens to enjoy and books in the long winter evenings.

—D. E. Stevenson

In the winter she curls up around a good book and dreams away the cold.

--Ben Aaronovitch

Books are hindrances to persisting stupidity.

—Spanish Proverb

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

—*www.raisingreaders.org*

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, listen-  
ing, care—from reading and from reading about friendship between people.

—Erin Wunker

Choose an author as you choose a friend.

--Earl of Roscommon

Do not consider it proof just because it is written in books, for a liar who will deceive with his tongue will not hesitate to do the same with his pen.

—Maimonides

Those who decide to use leisure as a means of mental development, who love good music, good books, good pictures, good plays, good company, good conversation— what are they? They are the happiest people in the world.

--William Lyon Phelps

Sufficient for me are a corner by the hearth, a book, a friend, and time enough for sleep, undisturbed by debts or sorrows.

--Andres Fernandez de  
Andrada

A quiet secluded life in the country, with the possibility of being useful to people to whom it is easy to do good, and who are not accustomed to have it done to them; then work which one hopes may be of some use; then rest, nature, books, music, love for one's neighbor — such is my idea of happiness.

—Leo Tolstoy

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

—Julia Quinn

A morning-glory at my window satisfies me more than the metaphysics of books.

--Walt Whitman

Give books—religious or otherwise—for Christmas. They're never fattening, seldom sinful, and permanently personal.

—Lenore Hershey

Books, they offer one hope—that a whole universe might open up from between the covers, and falling into that universe, one is saved.

--Anne Rice

Speaking personally, you can have my gun, but you'll take my book when you pry my cold, dead fingers off of the binding.

--Stephen King



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

—Francis Bacon

These weren't cheap modern books; these were books bound in leather, and not just leather, but leather from clever cows who had given their lives for literature after a happy existence in the very best pastures.

--Terry Pratchett

Think not of the fragility of life, but of the power of books, when mere words have the ability to change our lives simply by being next to each other.

--Kamand Kojouri

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

Like some wondrous birds out of fairy tales, books sang their songs to me and spoke to me as though communing with one languishing in prison; they sang of the variety and richness of life, of man's audacity in his strivings towards goodness and beauty.

--Maxim Gorky

Books have that strange quality, that being of the frailest and tenderest matter, they outlast brass, iron and marble.

--William Drummond

If I have nothing but a room full of books, it is enough for me to survive life.

--Lailah Gifty Akita

Inspired by the purse rather than the soul, the mercenary side fairly screams in many of the works put out by every day American publishers.

—Alma Gluck

All the great treasures of life are hidden in a book.

--Lailah Gifty Akita

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

Words are just words; a book never harmed anyone by itself.

--Rob May

Later that night though, as I stayed awake into the early hours of morning devouring the second novel in a series, I understood what it meant to befriend a book. The books knew me, far better than I knew them; they knew my fears, my doubts, my dreams. They gave words to feelings I did not even realize I experienced. They listened. They consoled. They kept me company. The books gave me a life outside of my own.

--Kelseyleigh Reber

Some books must be sipped slowly like a strong bourbon. Most books must be devoured more than once because as you age you distill more.

--Brandi L. Bates

Books had taught me new ideas and had shown me ways of life that I would not have known about otherwise, and they offered a refuge when, like now, real life seemed too hard.

--Peg Kehret

The popular culture gives us books that offer entertainment but no ideas. High culture gives us books that offer ideas but no entertainment. The best books manage to do both.

--Gene Edward Veith Jr.

Matilda's strong young mind continued to grow, nurtured by the voices of all those authors who had sent their books out into the world like ships on the sea.

--Roald Dahl

Through books I discovered everything to be loved, explored, visited, communed with. I was enriched and given all the blueprints to a marvelous life, I was consoled in adversity, I was prepared for both joys and sorrows, I acquired one of the most precious sources of strength of all: an understanding of human beings, insight into their motivations.

--Anais Nin

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

Stories don't teach us to be good; it isn't as simple as that. They show us what it feels like to be good, or to be bad. They show us people like ourselves doing right things and wrong things, acting bravely or acting meanly, being cruel or being kind, and they leave it up to our own powers of empathy and imagination to make the connection with our own lives. Sometimes we do, sometimes we don't. It isn't like putting a coin in a machine and getting a chocolate bar; we're not mechanical, we don't respond every time in the same way...

The moral teaching comes gently, and quietly, and little by little, and weighs nothing at all. We hardly know it's happening. But in this silent and discreet way, with every book we read and love, with every story that makes its way into our heart, we gradually acquire models of behavior and friends we admire and patterns of decency and kindness to follow.

--Philip Pullman

All the books in the library are contemporary. Great poems are like granaries: they are always ready to enlarge their store.

--William H. Gass

When a child is born, I once explained to the kids, some dads lay down bottles of wine for them that will mature when they grow up into ungrateful adults. Instead, what you're going to get from me, as each of you turns sixteen, is a library of the one hundred books that gave me the most pleasure when I was a know-nothing adolescent.

--Mordecai Richler

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

—E.A. Bucchianeri

Every child deserves to be a boat cast out in a sea of books.

--K. Lamb

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

Many of the greatest books are like a forest. The best way to get to know them is to wander right into the middle and get lost.

--Anthony M. Esolen

Books can make a difference in dispelling prejudice and building community: not with role models and recipes, not with noble messages about the human family, but with enthralling stories that make us imagine the lives of others. A good story lets you know people as individuals in all their particularity and conflict; and once you see someone as a person—flawed, complex, striving—you've reached beyond stereotype.

--Hazel Rochman

I realize that people still read books now and some people actually love them, but in 1946 in the Village our feelings about books--I'm talking about my friends and myself--went beyond love. It was as if we didn't know where we ended and books began. Books were our weather, our environment, our clothing. We didn't simply read books; we became them. We took them into ourselves and made them into our histories. While it would be easy to say that we escaped into books, it might be truer to say that books escaped into us. Books were to us what drugs were to young men in the sixties.

They showed us what was possible. We had been living with whatever was close at hand, whatever was given, and books took us great distances. We had known only domestic emotions and they showed us what happens to emotions when they are homeless. Books gave us balance—the young are so unbalanced that anything can make them fall. Books steadied us; it was as if we carried a heavy bag of them in each hand and they kept us level. They gave us gravity.

--Anatole Broyard

When I was little, my ambition was to grow up to be a book. Not a writer. People can be killed like ants. Writers are not hard to kill either. But not books: however systematically you try to destroy them, there is always a chance that a copy will survive and continue to enjoy a shelf-life in some corner on an out-of-the-way library somewhere in Reykjavik, Valladolid or Vancouver.

--Amos Oz

People perish. Books are immortal.

--Robert Harris

An honest bookstore would post the following sign above its 'self-help' section: 'For true self-help, please visit our philosophy, literature, history and science sections, find yourself a good book, read it, and think about it.'

--Roger Ebert

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

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

Books are the preservation of all that has been and all that is; they are the prediction of all that will come. They are the foundation of our culture, a record of our heritage.

—Jeanneine P. Jones

Throughout their growing years, books transport children through time, space, and mood. They discover the excitement of new countries and cities, distant places and happenings, different cultures, and varieties in lifestyles. These wondrous voyages through books can begin at any age, but for children each is an exciting new adventure until they choose to close the book.

Books are important sources of information for the curious child who wishes to pursue existing interests, to open new areas of inquiry, or to learn new skills. Nine-year-old Karen learned to sketch dogs using how-to-draw books as her teacher; twelve-year-old James learned the fundamentals of dog obedience training by reading three books. As he trained his German Shepherd, he turned regularly to the books to clarify points and make sure that his procedures were correct. As youngsters visit new places, they see geological structures, plants, and animals that are unfamiliar to them. They meet people of different ethnic groups and cultures. Books provide information about these regional diversities and supply the background for understanding historical or cultural distinctions. Travel and vacations become more meaningful when an appropriate book is packed in the suitcase with the camera.

—Alice K. Swinger

During the early years of a child's life, critical events take place that can be emotionally upsetting. A sibling is born, the family moves to a new home, a stay in the hospital as necessary. Books read before the anticipated experience can prepare the child and make the approaching event something that is expected and natural rather than rejected and feared. Books provide access to the feelings of others. Through identification with the character's emotions and how the character copes with those emotions, a child takes the first steps in developing empathy and compassion.

—Alice K. Swinger

Fortunately, Americans continued to import books from England long after they refused to buy its tea. British writers and illustrators were well-known in the U.S. Beatrix Potter's *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* (1901); Rudyard Kipling's *Just So Stories* (1902); Kenneth Grahame's *Wind in the Willows* (1904) were favorites and continue to be so. Also published during those years and still popular were *The Secret Garden* (1910) by Frances Hodgson Burnett, *Peter Pan* (1904) by J. M. Barrie, and the fairy tales of Hans Christian Andersen. These authors abandoned the sticky sentimentality and the heavy didacticism of earlier children's books. The stories were exciting; the adventures were daring. They entertained and gave enjoyment to children.

—Alice K. Swinger

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

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

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

--Pat Conroy

I began quite a while ago to resist declarations of literary greatness in the sense of singling out any one book as The Great American Novel, or even making lists of the Great American Books. Partly because the supposed categories of excellence omitting all genre writing, and the awards and reading lists and canons routinely and unquestioningly favoring work by men in the eastern half of the United States, made no sense to me. But mostly because I didn't think and don't think we have much idea of what's enduringly excellent until it's endured [...] Art is not a horse race. Literature is not the Olympics. The hell with The Great American Novel. We have all the great novels we need right now—and right now some man or woman is writing a new one we won't know we needed till we read it.

—Ursula K. Le Guin

Books talk to you for an afternoon.  
Literature speaks for generations.

—Terri Guillemets

'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

In premodern times, the French scholar Philippe Aries famously argued, there was no childhood in the sense that we understand it. Children were imagined as little adults, just the way that they were depicted in many paintings. Books for them were made to match. When New England children studied the alphabet in the New England Primer, for instance, they learned that they had to choose whether they would be sinners or saints, whether they wanted to live or die.

In the early 19th century, a 'Romantic vision of childhood' (as the historian Steven Mintz calls it) supplanted these earlier ideas. Middle-class Victorians re-conceived of childhood as an idyll, free from worry and fears of all kinds. They thought that it had to be so, because they imagined their children as fragile and incapable beings. To enjoy this period of life, children had to be shielded from the discomfiting realities of grown-up existence. It is no surprise that Victorian books for children skewed toward sanitized fairy tales, tame fantasies, and anachronistic histories. More than a century later, these notions continue to echo in the vast number of children's books that paint a rosy, untroubled picture of the world, as though that were all young minds were able to bear.

—Nathan Perl-Rosenthal



In nobler books we are moved with something like the emotions of life; and this emotion is very variously provoked.

—Robert Louis Stevenson

There is a man in New England, supposedly sound of mind and body, who has devoted virtually his entire life and fortune to a collection of recognized classics in unrecognized languages. His treasures include *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in Ukrainian, *Ben Hur* in Hebrew, and *Hamlet* in Hindustani.

Another collector seeks only first editions of books Abraham Lincoln was known to have read in his leisure hours.

A third buys volumes printed on black paper. No other color interests him.

A fourth seeks odd-shaped volumes: round, heart-shaped, fashioned after fruits and animals.

A fifth's sole craving is for books left unfinished because of their author's untimely deaths—titles like Dickens' *Mystery of Edwin Drood*, Stevenson's *Weir of Hemiston*, and Hawthorne's *Dr. Grimshaw's Secret*.

Smallest book: An edition of *Omar Khayyam* published in 1933 in Worcester, Massachusetts. Each copy, bound in full crimson morocco, weighs only a third of a carat. The whole edition of 150 would fit in an old-fashioned watchcase.

Largest book: *Up the River Nile at Thebes*, in the Temple of Rameses II. Its 'pages' are walls 138 feet wide— an ancient chronicle of triumph that has defied obliteration for more than 3000 years.

Most secure book: Bishop Linwood's *The Provinciale*, which, according to his will, was chained 'for all time' to St. Stephen's Chapel, Westminster, to serve as the standard text of his work and discourage effectively both borrowers and abridgers.

—Bennet Cerf

A very, very up-to-the-minute young lady in one of Raymond Weaver's literature classes at Columbia asked him whether he had read a best-seller of the moment. When he confessed that he had not, she cried reproachfully, 'Oh, you'd better hurry up; it's been out for over three months!' 'Young lady,' said Weaver severely, 'have you read Dante's Divine Comedy? No? Well, you'd better hurry up; it's been out for over six hundred years.'

—Bennet Cerf

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

Please, no matter how we advance technologically, please don't abandon the book. There is nothing in our material world more beautiful than the book.

--Patti Smith

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

—Erica Jong

As 1968 began, Paul Ehrlich was an entomologist at Stanford University, known to his peers for his groundbreaking studies of the co-evolution of flowering plants and butterflies but almost unknown to the average person. That was about to change. In May, Ehrlich released a quickly written, cheaply bound paperback, *The Population Bomb*. Initially it was ignored. But over time Ehrlich's tract would sell millions of copies and turn its author into a celebrity. It would become one of most influential books of the 20th Century—and one of the most heatedly attacked.

The first sentence set the tone: 'The battle to feed all of humanity is over.' And humanity had lost. In the 1970s, the book promised, 'hundreds of millions of people are going to starve to death.' No matter what people do, 'nothing can prevent a substantial increase in the world death rate.'

—Charles C. Mann

Books look as if they contain knowledge, while e-readers look as if they contain information.

--Julian Barnes

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

The Christian's *Bible* is a drug store. Its contents remain the same, but the medical practice changes.

—Mark Twain

Books are better than television, the internet, or the computer for educating and maintaining freedom.

Books matter because they state ideas and then attempt to thoroughly prove them. They have an advantage precisely because they slow down the process, allowing the reader to internalize, respond, react and transform. The ideas in books matter because time is taken to establish truth, and because the reader must take the time to consider each idea and either accept it or, if he rejects it, to think through sound reasons for doing so. A nation of people who write and read is a nation with the attention span to earn an education and free society if they choose.

--Oliver DeMille

*Yongle Encyclopedia*: More than 2,000 scholars contributed to this 11,000-volume Ming Dynasty text on subjects ranging from agriculture to art, theology and natural sciences. Half of 800 remaining volumes burned in the Boxer Rebellion of 1900; 3 percent of the original text survives.

—Duncan Barile

New media don't succeed because they're like the old media, only better: they succeed because they're worse than the old media at the stuff the old media is good at, and better at the stuff the old media are bad at. Books are good at being paper-white, high-resolution, low-infrastructure, cheap and disposable. Ebooks are good at being everywhere in the world at the same time for free in a form that is so malleable that you can just pastebomb it into your IM session or turn it into a page-a-day mailing list.

--Cory Doctorow

If books were Persian carpets, one would not look only at the outer side. because it is the stitch that makes a carpet wear, gives it its life and bloom.

—Rumer Godden

There is no mistaking a real book when one meets it. It is like falling in love, and like that colossal adventure it is an experience of great social import. Even as the tranced swain, the booklover yearns to tell others of his bliss. He writes letters about it, adds it to the postscript of all manner of communications, intrudes it into telephone messages, and insists on his friends writing down the title of the find. Like the simple-hearted betrothed, once certain of his conquest,

--Christopher Morley

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

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

Books have an especially high status on the great chain of media (higher than, say, columns, blogs, TV shows, magazine articles and Twitter tweets.)

—Dick Meyer

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

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

## 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.com.

—Dan L. Miller

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

The most accomplished way of using books is to serve them as some people do lords; learn their titles and then brag of their acquaintance.

—Laurence Sterne

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

Start a family library so your child's favorite books can be enjoyed again and again. Of course, few families can afford to buy every book their children like. But with a little planning, you can have a library that will spark your child's interest in reading. Here's how:

- Buy paperback books. To make them last, cover them with clear contact paper.
- Encourage your kids to swap books with friends. Host a neighborhood 'read-in,' with everyone bringing favorite books to your house. Afterwards, they can exchange or borrow books.
- Look for a used book store. You can often buy books for a very reasonable price. Your library may also hold a used book sale.
- Give books for gifts. Establish a family tradition of giving books for holidays. If you're not sure which book to choose, give a gift certificate to a bookstore.

—*The Parent Institute*

The late S. S. McClure, pioneer magazine and book publisher, was waylaid on the way to his inner office one morning by a determined lady who demanded, 'Did you keep your promise and read the manuscript I gave you?' To be rid of her, he answered, 'I did. We can't use it.' She appeared crestfallen and murmured, 'I suppose the little verses at the beginning of each chapter detracted from the story. Maybe they should come out.' 'No, no,' said the publisher suavely. 'Those little verses add to the interest. I'd leave them in by all means.'

'Mr. McClure,' the lady answered triumphantly, 'there are no little verses at the head of each chapter. You simply haven't read the manuscript as you said you would. I'm going to sit right here until you do.' McClure realized he was trapped, and with a sigh, sat down to skim through the manuscript as quickly as possible. He decided to accept it, however. The lady was Mrs. Ovid Butler Jamison of Indianapolis, determined to set her brother astride the high road to literary fame. Her brother's name was Booth Tarkington. The manuscript was *Monsieur Beaucaire*.

—Bennett Cerf

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

—Dale Warren

The widow of a confirmed bibliophile, friend of H. C. L. Jackson, slowly read the letter left for her by her husband. ‘My dearest,’ he had written, ‘it is been a sorrow to me that you never shared my interest in rare books; but then, you have been patient. Not too often did you refer to the money I spent on this hobby of mine. ‘This note will come to you after I have gone. The mere fact that you are reading this book proves that once at least you have opened one of my favorite books.’ The note had been tucked in her husband’s best loved volume. It was sent to her, without comment, by the dealer to whom she had sold her husband’s entire library three days after his death.

—Bennett Cerf

Binding books in human skin was a big thing in the 17th and 18th centuries, particularly anatomical books and erotica. It’s called ‘anthropodermic bibliopegy’ and there are allegedly 47 human-skin-bound books in libraries and universities around the world, nine tested and confirmed to be human. Many instances of this are found on anatomical books, which are bound in the skin of the cadavers dissected for research. There are also some copies of Marquis de Sade’s *Justine et Juliette* that are bound in the tanned skin of female breasts. For context, Marquis de Sade was the sick \*\*\*\*\* after whom the word ‘sadist’ was invented. Some of the breast-bound books apparently even have the nipples in tact.

—Natalya Lobanova

## **AMERICA’S MOST SURPRISING BANNED BOOKS**

### **1. 1961: Tarzan series, Edgar Rice Burroughs**

Edgar Rice Burroughs’ classic series about a man living in the jungle was pulled from the shelves of a public library in the appropriately named town of Tarzana, California. Authorities thought the adventure stories unsuitable for youngsters, since there was no evidence that Tarzan and Jane had married before they started cohabiting in the treetops. Ralph Rothmund, who ran Burroughs’ estate, protested that the couple had taken marital vows in the jungle with Jane’s father serving as minister. ‘The father may not have been an ordained minister,’ said Rothmund, ‘but after all, things were primitive in those days in the jungle.’



## 2. Mid-1960s: *Where the Wild Things Are*, Maurice Sendak

Author Maurice Sendak had a hard time getting his classic children's book *Where the Wild Things Are* published, as many editors feared that troublemaker Max's imaginary adventure into a fantasy land was too dark and frightening. When the book was finally published in 1963, the book was banned because adults found it problematic that Max was punished by being sent to bed without dinner, and they also bristled at the book's supernatural themes. A 1969 column in *Ladies Home Journal* deemed the book 'psychologically damaging for 3-and 4-year-olds.'

## 3. Mid-1960s: *Harriet the Spy*, Louise Fitzhugh

*Harriet the Spy* was banned from shelves because the titular character spies. Some schools blocked Louise Fitzhugh's book from shelves when it came out in the 1960s because of concerns that the 11-year-old child's penchant for peeping on her neighbors, jotting down her brutally honest observations, and being generally disagreeable could negatively influence kids by setting a bad example. Early critics argued that Harriet 'didn't spy, but rather gossiped, slandered, and hurt other people without feeling sorry about her actions.'

## 4. 1969: The Dictionary

You might assume the dictionary is the least likely place a teen would search for illicit content, but school administrators in Alaska believed otherwise. Both *American Heritage* and Merriam Webster have been banned in various libraries and schools. In 1987, for example, the Anchorage School Board banned the *American Heritage Dictionary* for its 'objectionable' entries—particularly slang words, including 'bed,' 'knocker,' and 'balls.'

## 5. 1977: *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble*, William Steig

William Steig's *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble*, about an unassuming donkey transformed into a rock after finding a magic pebble, portrays a sweet-natured character wishing for the impossible. But the anthropomorphic animals in the award-winning children's book did not sit well with all audiences. In 1977, police associations in 12 states urged the libraries to remove the book, because it portrays police as pigs.

## 6. 1983: *The Diary of a Young Girl*, Anne Frank

*Diary of a Young Girl*, by Anne Frank, chronicles the tragic experience of a Jewish family in the Nazi-occupied Netherlands, where the 13-year-old and her family hid

until they were caught and sent to concentration camps in August 1944. The book has been challenged numerous times for sexually explicit passages, and, in 1983, the Alabama State Textbook Committee called for rejecting the book because it was ‘a real downer.’

7. 1989: *The Lorax*, Dr. Seuss

Beloved children’s author Dr. Seuss took a stand for the environment in 1971 with *The Lorax*, which describes the destruction of an imagined forest of woolly Truffula trees. The narrator chops down the trees to use their foliage to knit clothing. While some readers may have been offended by the book’s use of the word ‘stupid,’ it was the logging industry that was insulted by the anti-deforesting plot line.

8. 1990: *Little Red Riding Hood*, Trina Schart Hyman

When kids read *Little Red Riding Hood*, they take away the message that they shouldn’t talk to strangers—especially those with big, shiny teeth. But when school officials in Culver City, California, looked at an illustrated version of the tale by Trina Schart Hyman, they saw a different message: Alcohol is yummy. They were outraged that young Ms. Hood is pictured with a bottle of wine in her basket, which granny later glugs down. ‘Showing the grandmother who has consumed half a bottle of wine with a red nose is not a lesson we want to teach,’ said an official.

9. 1992: *Hansel and Gretel*, The Brothers Grimm

The Brothers Grimm infamously pushed children’s fairy tales to the limits—sometimes landing the 19th-century authors on the banned list. *Hansel and Gretel*, the tale of two siblings who get into trouble for eating sweets reserved for a witch, has been rejected before, but, in 1992, it was challenged again, this time by two self-proclaimed witches who said the tale gives witches a bad name.

10. 1993: *The Giver*, Lois Lowry

Since Lois Lowry’s *The Giver* was published in 1993, it’s been ‘one of the most controversial books in American schools,’ Slate reports. The dystopian young adult novel, about a 12-year-old boy’s discovery of the truths behind the seemingly perfect society in which he resides, is most commonly banned for being ‘unsuited to age group,’ for ‘violence,’ or for being ‘sexually explicit’ because of the tough themes it grapples with, including euthanasia and drug use.

11. Mid-1990s: *Where's Waldo?*, Martin Hanford

*Where's Waldo?* rose to popularity in the mid-1990s, challenging young readers to find the lanky, bespectacled Waldo in various crowded scenes. The problem wasn't the perpetually lost protagonist; it was a sunbathing woman suffering a wardrobe malfunction the size of a pinhead in a corner of one of Martin Hanford's drawings. The exposed breast got the book banned in Michigan and New York.

12. 1996: *Twelfth Night*, William Shakespeare

School authorities in Merrimack, New Hampshire, found nothing amusing about Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, in which a girl washes ashore after a shipwreck, disguises herself as a page, and falls in love with her male master. That jolly cross-dressing and fake-same-sex romance was deemed in violation of the district's 'prohibition of alternative lifestyle instruction,' and copies of the play were pulled from schools.

13. 1999: *James and the Giant Peach*, Roald Dahl

Roald Dahl's fantastical novel about a boy escaping his miserable life with his aunts by entering a magical, house-sized peach has repeatedly been banned because it contains the word 'ass.' Other schools bristled at the fact that *James and the Giant Peach* mentions snuff, tobacco, and whiskey. In Wisconsin in 1999, the book was banned because of concerns the spider licking its lips could be interpreted as sexual.

14. 2006: *Charlotte's Web*, E.B. White

Even arachnophobes love *Charlotte's Web*, a heartwarming tale about the friendship between a pig named Wilbur and a wordy barn spider called Charlotte. But a parents group in Kansas decided that any book featuring two talking animals must be the work of the devil, and so had E. B. White's 1952 work barred from classrooms. The group's central complaint was that humans are the highest level of God's creation, as shown by, they said, the fact we're 'the only creatures that can communicate vocally. Showing lower life forms with human abilities is sacrilegious and disrespectful to God.'

15. 2007: Harry Potter series, J.K. Rowling

While pretty much every child was devouring the final book in the Harry Potter series in 2007, one school was pulling all seven Potter books from its library shelves. The pastor of St. Joseph School in Wakefield, Massachusetts, deemed their sorcery-heavy storylines inappropriate for a Catholic school. Parents said the pastor

thought most children were ‘strong enough to resist the temptation,’ but his job was to ‘protect the weak and the strong.’

16. 2010: *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?*, Bill Martin

The children’s picture book *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* made a surprise appearance on the banned books list in January 2010 thanks to the Texas Board of Education. Author Bill Martin Jr. happens to have the same name as an obscure Marxist theorist, and no one ‘bothered’ to see if they were the same person.

17. 2010: *What’s Happening To My Body?*, Lynda Madaras

*What’s Happening To My Body?*, a classic guide to those awkward puberty years, was deemed inappropriate and banned by 21 school libraries in Texas. The father who brought the complaint in December 2010 was shocked that the book would be available to his 8-year-old. The ALA says the book has been one of the top banned and challenged titles by parents in the last decade.

—*The Week Magazine*  
Staff

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 hardly a pioneer’s hut which does not contain a few odd volumes of Shakespeare. I remember reading the feudal drama of *Henry V* for the first time in a log cabin.

—Alexis de Tocqueville

Many people, myself among them, feel better at the mere sight of a book.

--Jane Smiley

Books are mirrors: you only see in them what you already have inside you.

--Carlos Ruiz Zafón

Reading one book is like eating one potato chip.

--Diane Duane

A good book is an event in my life.

--Stendhal

In books I have traveled, not only to other worlds, but into my own. I learned who I was and who I wanted to be, what I might aspire to, and what I might dare to dream about my world and myself. More powerfully and persuasively than from the 'shalt nots' of the *Ten Commandments*, I learned the difference between good and evil, right and wrong. *A Wrinkle in Time* described that evil, that wrong, existing in a different dimension from our own. But I felt that I, too, existed much of the time in a different dimension from everyone else I knew. There was waking, and there was sleeping. And then there were books, a kind of parallel universe in which anything might happen and frequently did, a universe in which I might be a newcomer but was never really a stranger. My real, true world. My perfect island.

--Anna Quindlen

Everyone likes to look down on someone. If your favorites are all avant-garde writers who throw in Sanskrit and German, you can look down on everyone. If your favorites are all Oprah Book Club books, you can at least look down on mystery readers. Mystery readers have sci-fi readers. Sci-fi can look down on fantasy. And yes, fantasy readers have their own snobbishness. I'll bet this, though: in a hundred years, people will be writing a lot more dissertations on Harry Potter than on John Updike. Look, Charles Dickens wrote popular fiction. Shakespeare wrote popular fiction—until he wrote his sonnets, desperate to show the literati of his day that he was real artist. Edgar Allan Poe tied himself in knots because no one realized he was a genius. The core of the problem is how we want to define 'literature'. The Latin root simply means 'letters'. Those letters are either delivered—they connect with an audience—or they don't. For some, that audience is a few thousand college professors and some critics. For others, its twenty million women desperate for romance in their lives. Those connections happen because the books successfully communicate something real about the human experience. Sure, there are trashy books that do really well, but that's because there are trashy facets of humanity. What people value in their books—and thus what they count as literature—really tells you more about them than it does about the book.

--Brent Weeks

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

—J. K. Rowling

The world was a terrible place, cruel, pitiless, dark as a bad dream. Not a good place to live. Only in books could you find pity, comfort, happiness—and love. Books loved anyone who opened them, they gave you security and friendship and didn't ask anything in return; they never went away, never, not even when you treated them badly.

--Cornelia Funke

I intend to put up with nothing that I can put down.

--Edgar Allan Poe

A book is more than a verbal structure or series of verbal structures; it is the dialogue it establishes with its reader and the intonation it imposes upon his voice and the changing and durable images it leaves in his memory. A book is not an isolated being: it is a relationship, an axis of innumerable relationships.

--Jorge Luis Borges

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

The number of books in a home is a significant predictor of academic achievement.

—Sunil Iyengar  
Director, Research  
& Analysis  
National  
Endowment for the  
Arts

I am eternally grateful for my knack of finding in great books, some of them very funny books, reason enough to feel honored to be alive, no matter what else might be going on.

--Kurt Vonnegut

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

No longer an underground movement appealing to a small following of enthusiasts, graphic novels have emerged as a growing segment of book publishing, and have become accepted by librarians and educators as mainstream literature for children and young adults—literature that powerfully motivates kids to read....Graphic novels are books written and illustrated in the style of a comic book. The term graphic novel was first popularized by Will Eisner to distinguish his book *A Contract with God* (1978) from collections of newspaper comic strips. He described graphic novels as consisting of ‘sequential art’—a series of illustrations which, when viewed in order, tell a story. Although today’s graphic novels are a recent phenomenon, this basic way of storytelling has been used in various forms for centuries—early cave drawings, hieroglyphics, and medieval tapestries like the famous *Bayeux Tapestry* can be thought of as stories told in pictures. The term graphic novel is now generally used to describe any book in a comic format that resembles a novel in length and narrative development.

—[scholastic.com](http://scholastic.com)

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

The fiction stacks at the Homewood Library, their volumes alphabetized by author, baffled me. How can I learn to choose a novel? That I could not easily reach the top two shelves helped limit my choices a little. Still, on the lower shelves I saw too many books: Mary Johnson, *Sweet Rocket*; Samuel Johnson, *Rasselas*; James Jones, *From Here to Eternity*. I checked out the last because I had heard of it; it was good. I decided to check out books I had heard of. I had heard of the *Mill on the Floss*. I read it, and it was good. On its binding was printed a figure, a man dancing or running; I had noticed this figure before. Like so many children before and after me, I learned to seek out this logo, the Modern Library colophon.

—Annie Dillard

This was the most private and obscure part of life, this Homewood Library; a vaulted marble edifice in a mostly decent Negro neighborhood, the silent stacks of which I plundered in deep concentration for many years. There seemed then, happily, to be an infinitude of books.

I no more expected anyone else on earth to have read a book I had read than I expected someone else to have twirled the same blade of grass. I would never meet those Homewood people who were borrowing *The Field Book of Ponds and Streams*; the people who read my favorite books were invisible or in hiding, underground. Father occasionally raised his big eyebrows at the title of some volume I was hurrying off with, quite as if he knew what it contained—but I thought he must know of it by hearsay, for none of it seemed to make much difference to him. Books swept me away, one after the other, this way and that; I made endless vows according to their lights, for I believed them.

—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

Reach for the book. It is a weapon.

—Bertolt Brecht



We're all strangers connected by what we reveal, what we share, what we take away—our stories. I guess that's what I love about books—they are thin strands of humanity that tether us to one another for a small bit of time, that make us feel less alone or even more comfortable with our aloneness, if need be.

--Libba Bray

Readers often say that they love the scent of old books. 'A combination of grassy notes with a tang of acids and a hint of vanilla over an underlying mustiness' is how an international team of chemists describes the particular smell of decaying tomes.

—*openingthebook.com*

A survey of 600 college students conducted by pollster Zogby International found that 43 percent of students identified smell, either a new or old smell, as the quality they most liked about books as physical objects.

—*stackexchange.com*

Oh. Oops. We readers didn't think people noticed that we were discreetly sniffing the well-thumbed pages of our favorite novels. We thought we were hiding our olfactory indulgences by pretending to scratch our noses with our books, or pretending to fan ourselves with the pages of our book, or pretending we were practicing our deep meditative breathing while reading.

Even though sniffing a book is a strange thing to do in public, the truth is lots of readers smell their books in the privacy of their own homes. I know. It sounds funny. We don't talk about it with each other, but I assure you almost all bookworms crack open a book on the regular and a try to catch a whiff of the pages.

—Ginni Chen

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

As long as you have any floor space at all, you have room for books! Just make two stacks of books the same height, place them three or four feet apart, lay a board across them, and repeat. Viola! Bookshelves!

--Jan Karon

Few things leave a deeper mark on the reader, than the first book that finds its way to his heart.

--Carlos Ruiz Zafón

The problem with books is that they end.

--Caroline Kepnes

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

Books... are like lobster shells, we surround ourselves with 'em, then we grow out of 'em and leave 'em behind, as evidence of our earlier stages of development.

--Dorothy L. Sayers

Books are not about passing time. They're about other lives. Other worlds. Far from wanting time to pass, one just wishes one had more of it. If one wanted to pass the time one could go to New Zealand.

--Alan Bennett

With my eyes closed, I would touch a familiar book and draw its fragrance deep inside me. This was enough to make me happy.

--Haruki Murakami

I leapt eagerly into books. The characters' lives were so much more interesting than the lonely heartbeat of my own.

--Ruta Sepetys

What kind of life can you have in a house without books?

Sherman Alexie

Books are like imprisoned souls till someone takes them down from a shelf and frees them.

--Samuel Butler

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

There's nothing as cozy as a piece of candy and a book.

--Betty MacDonald

Fiction can show you a different world. It can take you somewhere you've never been. Once you've visited other worlds, like those who ate fairy fruit, you can never be entirely content with the world that you grew up in. Discontent is a good thing: discontented people can modify and improve their worlds, leave them better, leave them different.

And while we're on the subject, I'd like to say a few words about escapism. I hear the term bandied about as if it's a bad thing. As if 'escapist' fiction is a cheap opiate used by the muddled and the foolish and the deluded, and the only fiction that is worthy, for adults or for children, is mimetic fiction, mirroring the worst of the world the reader finds herself in.

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 armour: real things you can take back into your prison. Skills and knowledge and tools you can use to escape for real.

As JRR Tolkien reminded us, the only people who inveigh against escape are jailers.

--Neil Gaiman

An unread book does nobody any good. Stories happen in the mind of a reader, not among symbols printed on a page.

--Brandon Mull

For a moment I was distracted. Books always did that to me... I liked the creamy pages, the smell of ink, all the secrets locked inside.

--Elizabeth C. Bunce

Books are like oxygen to a deep-sea diver. Take them away and you might as well begin counting the bubbles.

--Alan Bradley

A book read by a thousand different people is a thousand different books.

--Andrei Tarkovsky

It's the books that you read when you're young that live with you forever.

—J. K. Rowling

The book smelled dusty and old but also carried a sweet tang, a hint of something inviting.

--Shannon Hale

No man understands a deep book until he has seen and lived at least part of its contents.

—Ezra Pound

I've developed a great reputation for wisdom by ordering more books than I ever had time to read, and reading more books, by far, than I learned anything useful from, except, of course, that some very tedious gentlemen have written books.

--Marilynne Robinson

The paperback is very interesting but I find it will never replace the hardcover book—it makes a very poor doorstep.

--Alfred Hitchcock

A man's bookcase will tell you everything you'll ever need to know about him.

--Walter Mosley

His gaze settles on the discarded book. He leans, reaching until his fingertips graze Dante's *Inferno*, still on its bed of folded sheets. 'What have we here?' he asks.

'Required reading,' I say.

'It's a shame they do that,' he says, thumbing through the pages. 'Requirement ruins even the best of books.'

--Victoria Schwab

I often feel sorry for people who don't read good books; they are missing a chance to lead an extra life.

--Scott Corbett

She did not care very much for other little girls, but if she had plenty of books she could console herself.

—Frances Hodgson  
Burnett

No one knows as well as I how much nonsense is printed in books.

--Julia Quinn

Books let us into their souls and lay open to us the secrets of our own.

--William Hazlitt

I took the volume to a table, opened its soft, ivory pages... and fell into it as into a pool during dry season.

--Janet Fitch

Few people ask from books what books can give us. Most commonly we come to books with blurred and divided minds, asking of fiction that it shall be true, of poetry that it shall be false, of biography that it shall be flattering, of history that it shall enforce our own prejudices. If we could banish all such preconceptions when we read, that would be an admirable beginning.

--Virginia Woolf

Now, 75 years [after *To Kill a Mockingbird*], in an abundant society where people have laptops, cell phones, iPods, and minds like empty rooms, I still plod along with books.

--Harper Lee

A written word is the choicest of relics. It is something at once more intimate with us and more universal than any other work of art. It is the work of art nearest to life itself. It may be translated into every language, and not only be read but actually breathed from all human lips;—not be represented on canvas or in marble only, but be carved out of the breath of life itself.

--Henry David Thoreau

Books are like people, in the sense that they'll turn up in your life when you most need them.

--Emma Thompson

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

Some books are so familiar that reading them is like being home again.

--Louisa May Alcott

Second-hand books are wild books, homeless books; they have come together in vast flocks of variegated feather, and have a charm which the domesticated volumes of the library lack. Besides, in this random miscellaneous company we may rub against some complete stranger who will, with luck, turn into the best friend we have in the world.

--Virginia Woolf

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

The only friends I have are the dead who have bequeathed their writings to me—I have no others.

--Thomas Bernhard

It has always been a happy thought to me that the creek runs on all night, new every minute, whether I wish it or know it or care, as a closed book on a shelf continues to whisper to itself its own inexhaustible tale.

--Annie Dillard

I love bookshelves, and stacks of books, spines, typography, and the feel of pages between my fingertips. I love bookmarks, and old bindings, and stars in margins next to beautiful passages. I love exuberant underlinings that recall to me a swoon of language-love from a long-ago reading, something I hoped to remember. I love book plates, and inscriptions in gifts from loved ones, I love author signatures, and I love books sitting around reminding me of them, being present in my life, being. I love books. Not just for what they contain. I love them as objects too, as ever-present reminders of what they contain, and because they are beautiful. They are one of my favorite things in life, really at the tiptop of the list, easily my favorite inanimate things in existence, and ... I am just not cottoning on to this idea of making them ... not exist anymore. Making them cease to take up space in the world, in my life? No, please do not take away the physical reality of my books.

--Laini Taylor

The object we call a book is not the real book, but its potential, like a musical score or seed. It exists fully only in the act of being read; and its real home is inside the head of the reader, where the symphony resounds, the seed germinates. A book is a heart that only beats in the chest of another.

--Rebecca Solnit

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 Dewdne

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

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

My books hold between their covers every story I've ever known and still remember, or have now forgotten, or may one day read; they fill the space around me with ancient and new voices.

--Alberto Manguel

Books are like truth serum—if you don't read, you can't figure out what's real.

--Rodman Philbrick

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

[Books] had a meaning for her as physical objects: she loved to walk down the street with a book under her arm. It had the same significance for her as an elegant cane from the dandy a century ago. It differentiated her from others.

--Milan Kundera

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

Even when reading is impossible, the presence of books acquired produces such an ecstasy that the buying of more books than one can read is nothing less than the soul reaching towards infinity... We cherish books even if unread, their mere presence exudes comfort, their ready access reassurance.

—A. E. Newton

My parents would frisk me before family events. Before weddings, funerals, bar mitzvahs, and what have you. Because if they didn't, then the book would be hidden inside some pocket or other and as soon as whatever it was got under way I'd be found in a corner. That was who I was...that was what I did. I was the kid with the book.

--Neil Gaiman

I require books as I require air.

--Sholem Asch

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



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

When I am dead,  
I hope it may be said:  
His sins were scarlet,  
but his books were read.

—Hilaire Belloc

It seems to me the book has not just aesthetic values—the charming little cloth box of the thing, the smell of the glue, even the print, which has its own beauty. But there's something about the sensation of ink on paper that is in some sense a thing, a phenomenon rather than an epiphenomenon. I can't break the association of electric trash with the computer screen. Words on the screen give the sense of being just another passing electronic wriggle.

—John Updike

Learning became her. She loved the smell of the book from the shelves, the type on the pages, the sense that the world was an infinite but knowable place. Every fact she learned seemed to open another question, and for every question there was another book.

--Robert Goolrick

Literature is the safe and traditional vehicle through which we learn about the world and pass on values from one generation to the next. Books save lives.

—Laurie Anderson

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

Never did she find anything so difficult as to keep herself from losing her temper when she was suddenly disturbed while absorbed in a book.

—Frances Hodgson  
Burnett

He had no money and no home; he lived entirely on the road of the racing circuit, sleeping in empty stalls, carrying with him only a saddle, his rosary, and his books....The books were the closest thing he had to furniture, and he lived in them the way other men live in easy chairs.

--Laura Hillenbrand

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

We become the books we read.

--Matthew Kelly

The books we love, they love us back. And just as we mark our places in the pages, those pages leave their marks on us.

--Jay Kristoff

A good book is always on tap; it may be decanted and drunk a hundred times, and it is still there for further imbibement.

--Holbrook Jackson

We do need knowledge. And perhaps in a thousand years we might pick smaller cliffs to jump off. The books are to remind us what asses and fools we are. They're Caesar's praetorian guard, whispering as the parade roars down the avenue, 'Remember, Caesar, thou art mortal.' Most of us can't rush around, talk to everyone, know all the cities of the world, we haven't time, money or that many friends. The things you're looking for...are in the world, but the only way the average chap will ever see ninety-nine per cent of them is in a book.

--Ray Bradbury

With freedom, books, flowers, and the moon, who could not be happy?

—Oscar Wilde

Like flies in amber, like corpses frozen in ice, that which according to the laws of nature should pass away is, by the miracle of ink on paper, preserved. It is a kind of magic. As one tends the graves of the dead, so I tend the books. 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.

--Diane Setterfield

Show me the books he loves and I shall know the man far better than through mortal friends.

--S. Weir Mitchell

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

I love the writers of my thousand books. It pleases me to think how astonished old Homer, whoever he was, would be to find his epics on the shelf of such an unimaginable being as myself, in the middle of an unrumored continent. I love the large minority of the writers on my shelves who have struggled with words and thoughts and, by my lights, have lost the struggle. All together they are my community, the creators of the very idea of books, poetry, and extended narratives, and of the amazing human conversation that has taken place across the millennia, through weal and woe, over the heads of interest and utility.

--Marilynne Robinson

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

In a word, literature is my Utopia. Here I am not disfranchised. 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. The things I have learned and the things I have been taught seem of ridiculously little importance compared with their 'large loves and heavenly charities.'

--Helen Keller

A book reads the better which is our own, and has been so long known to us, that we know the topography of its blots, and dog's ears, and can trace the dirt in it to having read it at tea with buttered muffins.

--Charles Lamb

Some people claim that it is okay to read trashy novels because sometimes you can find something valuable in them. You can also find a crust of bread in a garbage can, if you search long enough, but there is a better way.

--Jim Rohn

There are head books, heart books, and pocket books. One you write just for the money. One you write because it's something you've always wanted to write—it's important to your soul to write. And one you write because it's interesting—it's something you simply want to explore.

—Jane Yolen

I still have my own research library that I have built up over the years, which includes: two complete sets of encyclopedias, as well as huge collections of folklore, poetry, children's books, nonfiction (especially natural history and American and European history), books on writing, art books, cookbooks, biographies of writers, mysteries, science fiction and fantasy, and 19th through 21st century fiction. I haunt old bookstores and go to library sales, League of Women Voters sales, antique stores, and garage sales....In the matter of owning books for research, be over-prepared.

—Jane Yolen

[*Where the Wild Things Are*] is an onion book. Every time you read it, you find another layer. Even though it's only 10 sentences, 37 pages, 337 words, you ask another question each time you read it....There's a lot going on in that book—if you just read it once, you never get it all. You just get the little story. But it has stories upon stories within it, and I want to know more. Some of it I'll never know, and some of it I can guess at.

—Jane Yolen

A truly good book is something as natural, and as unexpectedly and unaccountably fair and perfect, as a wild-flower discovered on the prairies of the West or in the jungles of the East. Genius is a light which makes the darkness visible, like the lightning's flash, which perchance shatters the temple of knowledge itself—and not a taper lighted at the hearthstone of the race, which pales before the light of common day.

--Henry David Thoreau

I certainly couldn't have survived my childhood without books. All that deprivation and pain—abuse, broken home, a runaway sister, a brother with cancer—the books allowed me to withstand. They sustained me. I read still, prolifically, with great passion, but never like I read in those days: in those days it was life or death.

--Junot Díaz

What one wants really is ideal company and books are ideal company.

--Anita Brookner

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

Your house, being the place in which you read, can tell us the position books occupy in your life, if they are a defense you set up to keep the outside world at a distance, if they are a dream into which you sink as if into a drug, or bridges you cast toward the outside, toward the world that interests you so much that you want to multiply and extend its dimensions through books.

--Italo Calvino

This place is a mystery. A sanctuary. Every book, every volume you see, has a soul. The soul of the person who wrote it & the soul of those who read it & lived it & dreamed with it. Every time a book changes hands, every time someone runs his eyes down its pages, its spirit grows & strengthens. In this place, books no longer remembered by anyone, books that are lost in time, live forever, waiting for the day when they will reach a new reader's hands, a new spirit...'

--Carlos Ruiz Zafón

The thought of these vast stacks of books would drive him mad: the more he read, the less he seemed to know—the greater the number of the books he read, the greater the immense uncountable number of those which he could never read would seem to be.... The thought that other books were waiting for him tore at his heart forever.

--Thomas Wolfe

Home is where your books are.

--Kerstin Gier

Books are, let's face it, better than everything else. If we played Cultural Fantasy Boxing League, and made books go fifteen rounds in the ring against the best that any other art form had to offer, then books would win pretty much every time.

--Nick Hornby

I would rather read a mediocre book than waste time sitting around with people making small talk.

--James D. Sass

What a vast fertility of pleasure books hold for me! I went in and found the table laden with books. I looked in and sniffed them all. I could not resist carrying this one off and broaching it. I think I could happily live here and read forever.

--Virginia Woolf

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

I am a machine condemned to devour books.

--Karl Marx

I couldn't get to sleep. The book lay nearby. A thin object on the divan. So strange. Between two cardboard covers were noises, doors, howls, horses, people. All side by side, pressed tightly against one another. Boiled down to little black marks. Hair, eyes, voices, nails, legs, knocks on doors, walls, blood, beards, the sound of horse-shoes, shouts. All docile, blindly obedient to the little black marks. The letters run in mad haste, now here, now there. The a's, f's, y's, k's all run. They gather together to create a horse or a hailstorm. They run again. Now they create a dagger, a night, a murder. Then streets, slamming doors, silence. Running and running. Never stopping.

--Ismail Kadare

A homeless man visited my store today. The few quarters that he had in his pocket he invested on books. I offered him free books, but he insisted on giving me his quarters. He walked away filled with joy as if he possessed the world's riches in his hands. In a way, he did. He left me smiling and knowing that he was wealthier than many others.

--Besa Kosova

Give me...a good book, or a good newspaper, and sit me down afore a good fire, and I ask no better.

—Charles Dickens

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

Turn the page, your heroine is still there, breathe, relax, life is beautiful: you're in a book!

--Gabrielle Dubois

Books act like a developing fluid on film. That is, they bring into consciousness what you didn't know you knew.

--Clifton Fadiman

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

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

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

I do not believe that all books will or should migrate onto screens: as Douglas Adams once pointed out to me, more than 20 years before the Kindle turned up, a physical book is like a shark. Sharks are old: there were sharks in the ocean before the dinosaurs. And the reason there are still sharks around is that sharks are better at being sharks than anything else is. Physical books are tough, hard to destroy, bath-resistant, solar-operated, feel good in your hand: they are good at being books, and there will always be a place for them. They belong in libraries, just as libraries have already become places you can go to get access to ebooks and audiobooks and DVDs and web content.

—Neil Gaiman

Books are the way that we communicate with the dead. The way that we learn lessons from those who are no longer with us, that humanity has built on itself, progressed, made knowledge incremental rather than something that has to be re-learned, over and over. There are tales that are older than most countries, tales that have long outlasted the cultures and the buildings in which they were first told.

—Neil Gaiman

We forget that the simple gesture of putting a book in someone's hands can change a life. I want to remind you that it can. I want to thank you because it did.

--Kate DiCamillo

There is no substitute for books in the life of a child.

--Mary Ellen Chase

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



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

The book can produce an addiction as fierce as heroin or nicotine, forcing us to spend much of our lives, like junkies, in book shops and libraries, those literary counterparts to the opium den.

--Phillip Adams

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

—B. R. Myers

There's a book for everyone, even if they don't think there is. A book that reaches in and grabs your soul.

--Veronica Henry

Collect books, even if you don't plan on reading them right away. Filmmaker John Waters has said, 'Nothing is more important than an unread library.'

--Austin Kleon

He says he knows someone isn't from the same race as he when that person looks at his library and asks, 'Have you read all of these?' A true book lover knows that, no, he hasn't read them all. It's about the process, it's about when the right reference comes up, you have the right book to go to; it's about never being without something to occupy your eyes and mind.

--Jamie S. Rich

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

The best book is not one that informs merely, but one that stirs the reader up to inform himself.

—A. W. Tozer

## **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

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

I inhaled the musty, leathery, old-papery scent and a shiver passed over me. If I had any idea of heaven, it was this: shelves and shelves of books, ten times as many as were upstairs, each with stories or pictures more exciting and beautiful than the next, and two overstuffed chairs big enough for me to sleep in.

--Clay Carmichael

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.

I think the reason novels are regarded to have so much more ‘information’ than films is that they outsource the scenic design and cinematography to the reader... This, for me, is a powerful argument for the value and potency of literature specifically. Movies don’t demand as much from the player. Most people know this; at the end of the day you can be too beat to read but not yet too beat to watch television or listen to music.

—Brian Christian

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

There must be a secret hidden in this book or else you wouldn't bother to read it.

—Kathy Acker

Every book is judged by its cover until it is read.

—Maryrose Wood

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

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

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

Of all books printed, probably not more than half are ever read. Many are embalmed in public libraries; many go into private quarters to fill spaces; many are glanced at and put away...scarcely opened until the fire needs kindling. The most ardent book-lovers are not always the greatest readers; indeed, the rabid bibliomaniac seldom reads at all. To him books are as ducats to the miser, something to be hoarded and not employed... So pleasant it is to buy book; so tiresome to utilize them.

—Flora Haines Loughead

No days, perhaps, of all our childhood are ever so fully lived are those that we had regarded as not being lived at all: days spent wholly with a favourite book.

—Marcel Proust

'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

I do lend my books, but I have to be a bit selective because my marginalia are so incriminating.

—Leah Price

As soon as I got into the library I closed my eyes and took a deep breath. I got a whiff of the leather on all the old books, a smell that got real strong if you picked one of them up and stuck your nose real close to it when you turned the pages. Then there was the the smell of the cloth that covered the brand-new books, books that made a splitting sound when you opened them. Then I could sniff the the paper, that soft, powdery, drowsy smell that comes off the page in little puffs when you're reading something or looking at some pictures, kind of hypnotizing smell.

I think it's the smell that makes so many folks fall asleep in the library. You'll see someone turn a page and you can imagine a puff of page powder coming up real slow and easy until it starts piling on a person's eyelashes, weighing their eyes down so much they stay down a little longer after each blink and finally making them so heavy that they just don't come back up at all. Then their mouths open and their heads start bouncing up and down like they're bobbing in a big tub of of water for apples and before you know it... they're out cold and their face thunks smack-dab on the book.

That's the part that makes librarians the maddest. They get real upset if folks start drooling in the books.

—Christopher Paul  
Curtis

Let me begin with a heartfelt confession.

I admit it. I am a biblioholic, one who loves books and whose life would seem incomplete without them. I am an addict, with a compulsive need to stop by nearly any bookstore I pass in order to get my fix. Books are an essential part of my life, the place where I have spent many unforgettable moments. For me, reading is one of the most enjoyable ways to pass a rainy afternoon or a leisurely summer day. I crave the knowledge and insights that truly great books bring into my life and can spend transported hours scouring used book stores for volumes which 'I simply must have'. I love the smell and feel of well-loved books and the look of a bookcase full of books waiting to be taken down and read.

—Terry W. Glaspey

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.

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

The finest music in the room is that which streams out to the ear of the spirit in many an exquisite strain from the little shelf of books on the opposite wall. Every volume there is an instrument which some melodist of the mind created and set vibrating with music, as a flower shakes out its perfume or a star shakes out its light. Only listen, and they soothe all care, as though the silken-soft leaves of poppies had been made vocal and poured into the ear.

—James Lane Allen

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

If I had to pick one place to hang out anywhere, from New York to Cape Town and Australia to Hong Kong, a bookstore would be it.

—Gloria Steinem

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

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

Owning a book is a third of the goal. The others are actually reading it and applying it.

—Israel Wayne

You never forget the books you loved as a kid. You never forget the poems you memorized, the first book you read until the cover fell off, the book you read hidden from your mother. What an honor to hold hands with a child's imagination in this way.

—Meg Medina

No matter how people mess with you or let you down, or how you let yourself down, a good book means that when you get in bed that night, you have a good hour. I feel like you pay all day for that hour. That's what books mean to me. I can open this two-dimensional, flat white page with squiggly little black marks on them, and someone has created this world that you're going to enter into.

—Anne Lamott

I find television very educating. Every time somebody turns on the set I go into the other room and read a book.

--Groucho Marx



The one thing I regret is that I will never have time to read all the books I want to read.

—Francoise Sagan

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

In my living room there are two large bookcases, each one eight feet tall, and they have about five hundred books between them. If I step up to a shelf and look at the books one by one, I can remember something about each. As a historian once said, some stare at me reproachfully, grumbling that I have never read them. One may remind me vaguely of a time when I was interested in romantic novels. An old college text will elicit a pang of unhappiness about studying. Each book has its character, and even books I know very well also have this kind of wordless flavor. Now if I step back from the shelf and look quickly across both bookcases I speed up that same process a hundredfold. Impressions wash across my awareness. But each book still looks back in its own way, answering the rude brevity of my gaze, calling faintly to me out of the corner of my eye. At that speed many books remain wrapped in the shadows of my awareness—I know I have looked past them and I know they are there, but I refuse to call them to mind.

—James Elkins

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

I love books. I need them, those self-contained little worlds between two covers where I can travel whenever I have the feeling I'm living in the wrong world—or when my own world is hemming me in or eluding me or hurting me.

—Melanie Raabe

She hung tightly onto the book for no other reason than it signified a connection to someone else in the world.

—Kay Solo

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

I am a product of the books that I've read throughout my life.

—Bill Walton

Sitting here I glance over my right shoulder at the little row of books, red and green and blue, which stand waiting for my hand, offering their accumulated riches. I think of the years that may be in store for me, and of all the pages I may turn.

—Siegfried Sassoon

Books bear the dreary whisper of an author's memory, a phantom of dreams and mares woven from lessons. Read and explore a life beyond your own, one where forgotten names triumph and fall, and where love and hate crumble the hardest hearts. There is power in words. It can alter the living, immortalize the dead, and forge Gods.

—H. S. Crow

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

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

No one with a book is ever alone, even in the darkest moments.

—Rachel Caine

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

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

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

Reading a book carves brand-new neural pathways into the ancient cortical bedrock of our brains. It transforms the way we see the world. Makes us, as Nicholas Carr puts it in his recent essay 'The Dreams of Readers', 'more alert to the inner lives of others'.

We become vampires without being bitten. In other words, more empathic. Books make us see in a way that casual immersion in the Internet, and the quickfire virtual world it offers, doesn't.

—Kevin Dutton

I was a shy girl, but when I read, I was adventurous. Books made me bolder.

—Roxane Gay

I run my fingers down the spines of old books and ancient tales. I smell the ink and feel the pages as I delicately peer at the words and paragraphs. Each book is home to a story, giving its characters immortality.

—Liz Newman

A bookshop is a peaceful sanctuary of silent voices waiting to be heard.

—Mala Naidoo

All books are magic. Just think...about what books make people do. People go to war on the basis of what they read in books. They believe in 'facts' just because they are written down. They decide to adopt political systems, to travel to one place rather than another, to give up their job and go on a great adventure, to love or to hate. All books have tremendous power. And power is magic.

—Scarlett Thomas

Built-in shelves line my bedroom, adjacent to my Japanese platform bed, purchased for its capacious rim, the better to hold those books that must be immediately accessible. Yet still they pile on my nightstand, and the grid of shelves continues in floor-to-ceiling formation across the wall, stampeding over the doorway in disorderly fashion, political memoirs mixed in with literary essays, Victorian novels fighting for space with narrative adventure, the Penguin classics never standing together in a gracious row no matter how hard I try to impose order. The books compete for attention, assembling on the shelf above the sofa on the other side of the room, where they descend by the window, staring back at me. As I lie in bed with another book, they lie in wait.

—Pamela Paul

[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

Books have given me a magic portal to connect with people of the past and the present. I know I shall never feel lonely or powerless again.

—Lisa Bu

It is often much harder to get rid of books than it is to acquire them. They stick to us in that pact of need and oblivion we make with them, witnesses to a moment in our lives we will never see again.

While they are still there, it is a part of us. I have noticed that many people make a note of the day, month, and year that they read a book; they build up a secret calendar. Others, before lending one, write their name on the flyleaf, note whom they lent it to in an address book, and add the date. I have known some book owners who stamp them or slip a card between their pages the way they do in public libraries. Nobody wants to mislay a book. We prefer to lose a ring, a watch, our umbrella, rather than a book whose pages we will never read again, but which retains, just in the sound of its title, a remote and perhaps long-lost emotion.

—Carlos María  
Domínguez

Choosing a book is so gratifying, it's worth dragging out the process, starting even before finishing the current one. As the final chapters approach, you can pile up the possibilities like a stack of travel brochures. You can lay out three books and let them linger overnight before making a final decision in the morning. You can Google the reviews; ask other people if they've read it, collect information. The choice may ultimately depend on the mood and the moment.

—Pamela Paul

Good books often answer questions you didn't even know you wanted to ask.

—Will Schwalbe

'They were probably reading on their tablets,' said Nina loyally. She loved her e-reader, too. 'Yes, I know,' said the man. 'But I couldn't see. I couldn't see what they were reading or ask them if it was good, or make a mental note to look for it later. It was as if suddenly, one day, all the books simply disappeared.'

—Jenny Colgan

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

When a bookworm finally decides to leave the house, perhaps to explore some literary destination in one of her novels, she will be surprised to know that there is a volatile, often antagonistic force in the real world known as the weather.

—Joyce Rachelle

I have lived in worlds beyond counting and countries as strange and wonderful as the dance of dust in sunbeams, because I have lived in books.

—Garon Whited

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

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

Those who spend the greater part of their time in reading or writing books are, of course, apt to take rather particular notice of accumulations of books when they come across them. They will not pass a stall, a shop, or even a bedroom-shelf without reading some title, and if they find themselves in an unfamiliar library, no host need trouble himself further about their entertainment.

—M. R. James

As a kid, I went to the library because, in books, there were people really living lives, and unlike my parents, they talked to me about important things.

—Gregory Sherl

The books I read when I was twenty completely changed when I read them when I was sixty.

—Sarah Addison Allen

Books are a portable kind of time travel. We go back as well as forward when we read them. When we come back into the now, after being immersed in worlds previously unknown to us, we find ourselves, transformed. Touched by their magic, nothing we ever perceived beforehand remains quite the same.

—Suzy Davies

Never underestimate the power of giving a book!

—Carmela Dutra

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

Literature is map of humanity, the documenter of civilization. Books introduce us to the landscape of the greatest minds of every century.

—Kilroy J. Oldster

Every book is a journey, a map into the complexities of the human mind and soul.

—Elif Shafak

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



Books need to have their spines cracked, their covers opened, and their pages ruffled for them to come alive.

—Chris Grabenstein

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

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

I feel that the care of libraries and the use of books, and the knowledge of books, is a tremendously vital thing, and that we who deal with books and who love books have a great opportunity to bring about something in this country which is more vital here than anywhere else, because we have the chance to make a democracy that will be a real democracy.

—Eleanor Roosevelt

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

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

What we are able to say about our intimate relation with a book will have more force if we have not thought about it excessively. Instead, we need only let our unconscious express itself within us and give voice, in this privileged moment of openness in language, to the secret ties that bind us to the book, and therefore to ourselves.

—Pierre Bayard

His favorite books, those he'd read over and over so he knew just the lurch his heart would make when he turned the page and encountered the illustration of the despondent dragon under a half-moon or the fervor with which he flipped the final pages of another, the story so vivid he felt his relationship with that book was less an act of reading than a visit, a place he went to.

—Keith Miller

The shelves were supposed to be loaded with books—but they were, of course, really doors: each book-lid opened as exciting as Alice putting her gold key in the lock. I spent days running in and out of other worlds like a time bandit, or a spy. I was as excited as I've ever been in my life, in that library: scoring new books the minute they came in; ordering books I'd heard of—then waiting, fevered, for them to arrive, like they were the word Christmas.

—Caitlin Moran

Books! tis a dull and endless strife:  
Come, hear the woodland linnet,  
How sweet his music! on my life,  
There's more of wisdom in it.

—William Wordsworth

I opened a book and in I strode.  
Now nobody can find me.  
I've left my chair, my house, my road,  
My town and my world behind me.  
I'm wearing the cloak, I've slipped on the ring,  
I've swallowed the magic potion.  
I've fought with a dragon, dined with a king  
And dived in a bottomless ocean.  
I opened a book and made some friends.  
I shared their tears and laughter  
And followed their road with its bumps and bends  
To the happily ever after.  
I finished my book and out I came.  
The cloak can no longer hide me.  
My chair and my house are just the same,  
But I have a book inside me.

—Julia Donaldson

A precious, mouldering pleasure 'tis  
To meet an antique book,  
In just the dress his century wore;  
A privilege, I think,

His venerable hand to take,  
And warming in our own,  
A passage back, or two, to make  
To times when he was young.

His quaint opinions to inspect,  
His knowledge to unfold  
On what concerns our mutual mind,  
The literature of old.

—Emily Dickinson

The books [poetry collections] may not sell, but neither are they given away or thrown away. They tend, more than other books, to fall apart in their owners' hands. Not I suppose good news in a culture and economy built on obsolescence. But for a book to be loved this way and turned to this way for consolation and intense renewable excitement seems to me a marvel.

— Louise Glück

## 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

What's considered shocking today won't be shocking tomorrow. One of the most interesting lessons you learn in a used bookstore is that the paperbacks that were sensational—those considered groundbreaking or edgy or a bit naughty back in the day—eventually seem tame and a little quaint. Published in 1956, *Peyton Place* was the sort of book that got people riled up, with plot points revolving around extra-marital sex, incest (!) and abortion. Nowadays those storylines each have a sublist on the Amazon Bestsellers page.

—Jeff Somers

Steal not this book for fear of shame  
For on it is the owners name  
And when you die the Lord will say  
Where is the book you stole away  
And when you say you do not know  
The Lord will say go down below.

—L. M. Montgomery

Barry Lubetkin, clinical director of the *Institute for Behavior Therapy* in New York City, says adult coloring books have allowed some of his most over-wrought patients to relax and cope with panic. One 35-year-old woman told him, 'I lose myself in the color-choosing and trying to stay within the lines. Everything else dissolves into background.'

Lubetkin says this state of active, open attention on the present is precisely what he hopes patients achieve during the intense meditation he recommends. The chance to practice mindfulness—an awareness of what you are sensing and feeling at every moment, without interpretation or judgement.

—Franz Lidz

So began my love affair with books. Years later, as a college student, I remember having a choice between a few slices of pizza that would have held me over for a day or a copy of *On the Road*. I bought the book. I would have forgotten what the pizza tasted like, but I still remember Kerouac.

The world was mine for the reading. I traveled with my books. I was there on a tramp steamer in the North Atlantic with the Hardy Boys, piecing together an unsolvable crime. I rode into the Valley of Death with the six hundred and I stood at the graves of Uncas and Cora and listened to the mournful song of the Lenni Linape. Although I braved a frozen death at Valley Forge and felt the spin of a hundred bullets at Shiloh, I was never afraid. I was there as much as you are where you are, right this second. I smelled the gunsmoke and tasted the frost. And it was good to be there. No one could harm me there. No one could punch me, slap me, call me stupid, or pretend I wasn't in the room. The other kids raced through books so they could get the completion stamp on their library card. I didn't care about that stupid completion stamp. I didn't want to race through books. I wanted books to walk slowly through me, stop, and touch my brain and my memory. If a book couldn't do that, it probably wasn't a very good book. Besides, it isn't how much you read, it's what you read.

What I learned from books, from young Ben Franklin's anger at his brother to Anne Frank's longing for the way her life used to be, was that I wasn't alone in my pain. All that caused me such anguish affected others, too, and that connected me to them and that connected me to my books. I loved everything about books. I loved that odd sensation of turning the final page, realizing the story had ended, and feeling that I was saying a last goodbye to a new friend.

— John William Tuohy

It is often much harder to get rid of books than it is to acquire them. They stick to us in that pact of need and oblivion we make with them, witnesses to a moment in our lives we will never see again.

While they are still there, it is a part of us. I have noticed that many people make a note of the day, month, and year that they read a book; they build up a secret calendar. Others, before lending one, write their name on the flyleaf, note whom they lent it to in an address book, and add the date. I have known some book owners who stamp them or slip a card between their pages the way they do in public libraries. Nobody wants to mislay a book. We prefer to lose a ring, a watch, our umbrella, rather than a book whose pages we will never read again, but which retains, just in the sound of its title, a remote and perhaps long-lost emotion.

—Carlos María  
Domínguez

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

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

#### **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

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

The best thing about cheap used books is the cheap part, because you can purchase recklessly.

—Jeff Somers

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

### **BABY BOOK**

To a baby a book is a brick.  
A solid, colored, block.  
Eye it, lick it, chew it,  
And try to pry it open.  
The contents are still sealed  
The wonders inside are yet to be revealed.

—Dan L. Miller

Culture Shock rocked my literary sensibilities lately during a casual conversation with a recent college graduate. At the graduation party of this 'Straight A' biology major headed to Harvard medical school, I was leading the obligatory, congratulatory chit chat when I asked him if he'd read anything interesting or exciting lately. He looked at me as if I were from Mars and literally said, 'I don't read. The only thing I do read are textbooks I need to read for classes.' In my own life I've never not read and find it hard to believe highly educated others do not read for pleasure.

—Dan L. Miller

I picture myself when I was young, reading and re-reading novels by Sharon Creech, Louis Sachar, and E. L. Konigsburg, and I imagine someone patting my head and telling me these books were nice, but they weren't real novels. Books—not my community, my education, or any other institution—created the person I am today. These 'not-real' novels shaped my soul. It is impossible to say who I'd be without them; my identity is permanently linked to the reading I did when I was younger.

—Nicki Porter

All good books are alike in that they are truer than if they had really happened and after you are finished reading one you will feel that all that happened to you and afterwards it all belongs to you: the good and the bad, the ecstasy, the remorse and sorrow, the people and the places and how the weather was.

—Ernest Hemingway

Thank goodness my book finally arrived. I almost started cleaning the house.

—*www.belcastroagency.com*

## **BIBLIOTHERAPY**

A simple and effective method of helping children and parents deal with life traumas or specific behavioral problems is to provide them with books and instructional pamphlets designed to explain such issues in an age-appropriate way. Parents and children often take comfort in the fact that they are not alone in what they are experiencing and that there are suggested ways of coping that have proved successful for others in similar situations.

A good source of books is the BookFinder 4: When Kids Need Books, a listing of annotations of children's literature that addresses their needs and problems. The collection is published by American Guidance Associates, Circle Pines, Minnesota and edited by Sharon Spredemann Dreyer. Libraries can also provide lists of books on specific topics. Bookstores are also sources of therapeutic readings.

—Dan L. Miller



Two things put me in the spirit to give. One is that I have come to think of everyone with whom I come into contact as a patient in the emergency room. I see a lot of gaping wounds and dazed expressions. Or, as Marianne Moore put it, ‘The world’s an orphan’s home.’ And this feels more true than almost anything else I know. But so many of us can be soothed by writing: think of how many times you have opened a book, read one line, and said, ‘Yes!’ And I want to give people that feeling, too, of connection, communication.

—Anne Lamott

If you’ve been married for 400 years, as I have, it’s nice to experience first love again and you can vicariously through a book.

—E. L. James

Here’s what I want from a book, what I demand, what I pray for when I take up a novel and begin to read the first sentence: I want everything and nothing less, the full measure of a writer’s heart. I want a novel so poetic that I do not have to turn to the standby anthologies of poetry to satisfy that itch for music, for perfection and economy of phrasing, for exactness of tone. Then, too, I want a book so filled with story and character that I read page after page without thinking of food or drink because a writer has possessed me, crazed with an unappeasable thirst to know what happens next.

—Pat Conroy

When you are writing a book you have to include some descriptions of things. I said that I could take photographs and put them in the book. But she said the idea of a book was to describe things using words so that people could read them and make a picture in their own head.

—Mark Haddon

Life is just a series of obstacles preventing you from reading your book.

—*www.belcastroagency.com*

Having children’s books around the house and reading to preschoolers is vitally important. According to Mariah Evans, who headed a 20-year worldwide study that found ‘the presence of books in the home’ to be the top predictor of whether a child will attain a high level of education, ‘one of the things that is most striking...about it is that the book’s effect appears to be even larger and more important for children from very disadvantaged homes.’ By the way, one doesn’t have to be rich to have books around the house. Plus, there are libraries.

—Walter E. Williams

Our books are the deepest glimpses into our souls, the most raw and real anybody will ever find us.

—Melodie Ramone

Through the characters, we get to fall in love every time we pick up a romance novel. What could be better than that?

—Lori Wilde

Flowers don't tell, they show. That's the way good books should be too.

—Stephanie Skeem

I went to the library. I looked at the magazines, at the pictures in them. One day I went to the bookshelves, and pulled out a book. It was *Winesburg, Ohio*. I sat at a long mahogany table and began to read. All at once my world turned over. The sky fell in. The book held me. The tears came. My heart beat fast. I read until my eyes burned. I took the book home. I read another Anderson. I read and I read, and I was heartsick and lonely and in love with a book, many books, until it came naturally, and I sat there with a pencil and a long tablet, and tried to write, until I felt I could not go on because the words would not come as they did in Anderson.

—John Fante

Books in ancient India were written on palm leaves and so measured about 2 feet long by 2 inches wide.

—Roger Matile

At times I think to myself, 'Drop the book and get stuff done!' Then, I laugh and turn the page.

—Internet Meme

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

My book club reads wine labels.

—Internet Meme

When reading a book, one hopes it doesn't turn into a painful process. Predictable is bad enough. Laborious is acceptable if the labor produces fruit. But with painfully bad writing, all one can do is grab a hatchet, slice off its head, and bury it.

—Chila Woychik

Editors can be stupid at times. They just ignore that author's intention. I always try to read unabridged editions, so much is lost with cut versions of classic literature, even movies don't make sense when they are edited too much. I love the longueurs of a book even if they seem pointless because you can get a peek into the author's mind, a glimpse of their creative soul. I mean, how would people like it if editors came along and said to an artist, 'Whoops, you left just a tad too much space around that lily pad there, let's crop that a bit, shall we?'. Monet would be ripping his hair out.

—E. A. Bucchianeri

I'm a big believer in bibliotherapy. Books have the power to change lives: what we think and what we do.

—Eric Walters

Bibliotherapy is an expressive therapy that involves the reading of specific texts with the purpose of healing. It uses an individual's relationship to the content of books and poetry and other written words as therapy. Bibliotherapy is often combined with writing therapy. It has been shown to be effective in the treatment of depression. These results have been shown to be long-lasting.

—*Goodreads.com*

Bibliotherapy is a very broad term for the ancient practice of encouraging reading for therapeutic effect. The first use of the term is usually dated to a jaunty 1916 article in *The Atlantic Monthly*, 'A Literary Clinic.' In it, the author describes stumbling upon a 'bibliopathic institute' run by an acquaintance, Bagster, in the basement of his church, from where he dispenses reading recommendations with healing value. 'Bibliotherapy is...a new science,' Bagster explains. 'A book may be a stimulant or a sedative or an irritant or a soporific. The point is that it must do something to you, and you ought to know what it is. A book may be of the nature of a soothing syrup or it may be of the nature of a mustard plaster.' To a middle-aged client with "opinions partially ossified," Bagster gives the following prescription: 'You must read more novels. Not pleasant stories that make you forget yourself. They must be searching, drastic, stinging, relentless novels.' (George Bernard Shaw is at the top of the list.) Bagster is finally called away to deal with a patient who has 'taken an overdose of war literature,' leaving the author to think about the books that 'put new life into us and then set the life pulse strong but slow.'

—Ceridwen Dovey

For all avid readers who have been self-medicating with great books their entire lives, it comes as no surprise that reading books can be good for your mental health and your relationships with others, but exactly why and how is now becoming clear-

er, thanks to new research on reading's effects on the brain. Since the discovery, in the mid-nineties, of 'mirror neurons'—neurons that fire in our brains both when we perform an action ourselves and when we see an action performed by someone else—the neuroscience of empathy has become clearer. A 2011 study published in the *Annual Review of Psychology*, based on analysis of MRI brain scans of participants, showed that, when people read about an experience, they display stimulation within the same neurological regions as when they go through that experience themselves. We draw on the same brain networks when we're reading stories and when we're trying to guess at another person's feelings.

Other studies published in 2006 and 2009 showed something similar—that people who read a lot of fiction tend to be better at empathizing with others (even after the researchers had accounted for the potential bias that people with greater empathetic tendencies may prefer to read novels). And, in 2013, an influential study published in *Science* found that reading literary fiction (rather than popular fiction or literary nonfiction) improved participants' results on tests that measured social perception and empathy, which are crucial to 'theory of mind': the ability to guess with accuracy what another human being might be thinking or feeling, a skill humans only start to develop around the age of four.

—Ceridwen Dovey

We have started to show how identification with fictional characters occurs, how literary art can improve social abilities, how it can move us emotionally, and can prompt changes of selfhood. Fiction is a kind of simulation, one that runs not on computers but on minds: a simulation of selves in their interactions with others in the social world...based in experience, and involving being able to think of possible futures.

—Keith Oatley

Bibliotherapy can assist children in overcoming problems by having them read stories about characters who have successfully resolved a dilemma similar to their own. Identification with a literary model can foster thought and possible resolution to a problem such as dealing with a separation, illness, death, poverty, disability, alienation, disaster, war, etc. The underlying premise of bibliotherapy is that interpreting stories is an ever-changing process to which children bring their own needs and experiences. Since students often have difficulty identifying and communicating their feelings, stories can serve to facilitate open discussion and self-understanding. If children become emotionally involved with literary characters, they are more able to verbalize, act out, or draw pictures describing their innermost thoughts.

Use of bibliotherapy is not limited to crisis situations, nor is it a cure for severe psychological difficulties. It may not meet the needs of some children, especially those who are not ready to face their specific issue. Other students may be unable to transfer insights gained from reading into their own life, or may use literature as a

form of escape. Yet, these experiences with literary characters have been shown to be beneficial to many children.

The goals of bibliotherapy are to help children:  
identify and validate their feelings;  
realize that other children have problems similar to their own;  
stimulate discussion;  
foster thought and self-awareness;  
discover possible coping skills and solutions; and  
decide on a constructive course of action.

— Leah Davies

Bibliotherapy, as it's called, is a fast-growing profession. A recent survey suggests that 'over half of English library authorities are operating some form of bibliotherapy intervention, based on the books-on-prescription model'. That's to say, an increasing number of people are being referred by their GPs to the local library, where they'll find shelves or 'reading pharmacies' set aside for literature deemed relevant to their condition. Lapidus, an organisation established in 1996 'to promote the use of literary arts in personal development', has played a key role in bringing together writers and health professionals; as has the current editor of the Poetry Society's magazine, the poet Fiona Sampson.

—Blake Morrison

Perhaps the most convincing argument for the effectiveness of bibliotherapy comes from writers themselves. There's the case of George Eliot, for example, who recovered from the grief of losing her husband George Henry Lewes by reading Dante with a young friend, John Cross, who subsequently married her. 'Her sympathetic delight in stimulating my newly awakened enthusiasm for Dante did something to distract her mind from sorrowful memories,' Cross later wrote. 'The divine poet took us to a new world. It was a renovation of life.'

—Blake Morrison

The whole foundation on which my life was constructed fell down [and] I seemed to have nothing left to live for. Then one day a small ray of light broke in upon my gloom. I was reading, accidentally, *Marmontel's Mémoires*, and came to the passage which relates his father's death ... A vivid conception of the scene and its feelings came over me, and I was moved to tears. From this moment my being grew lighter. The oppression of the thought that all feeling was dead within me was gone. I was no longer hopeless: I was not a stock or a stone.

—John Stuart Mill

The...great therapeutic power of literature—it doesn't just echo our own experience, recognise, vindicate and validate it—it takes us places we hadn't imagined but which, once seen, we never forget. When literature is working—the right words in the right place—it offers an orderliness which can shore up readers against the disorder, or lack of control, that afflicts them.

—Blake Morrison

Novels...put readers in someone else's shoes, which encourages empathy and is valuable for socializing people. The simple act of appreciating someone else's suffering is likely to put your own in perspective, making books the ideal therapy for adolescents (at any age).

—Shannon Rupp

The idea of reading as a healing activity is not new; apparently King Ramses II of Egypt had a special chamber for his books, and above the door were the words 'House of Healing for the Soul.' Sigmund Freud incorporated literature into his psychoanalysis at the end of the nineteenth century. Medical professionals and psychologists have been prescribing books for their patients to read for a hundred years or more. But it was more as an adjunct to other treatment rather than a treatment in itself.

—Jenni Ogden

Although the bibliotherapists sometimes prescribe philosophy, poetry and creative nonfiction books, novels are more common. So why is fiction more therapeutic? Research has shown that literary fiction enhances our ability to empathize with others, to put ourselves into another's shoes; to become more intuitive about other people's feelings (as well as our own), and to self-reflect on our problems as we read about and empathize with a fictional character who is facing similar problems. When we find ourselves weeping with or for the character in the story, we are also weeping for ourselves; a sort of catharsis. When our character finds happiness in the end, well perhaps so can we. When the story drops us into a hurricane, we learn from that, and if we are ever faced with a real one, it will not be an entirely new experience. We may discover ourselves coping in ways that we can only have learned from that novel we read years before.

—Jenni Ogden

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

Bibliotherapy is for people for whom the words have become blurred, it is the use of fiction and poetry to support and increase positive outcomes for people with mental health and well-being issues. It can alleviate symptoms of depression and anxiety, increase self-esteem, improve social skills and concentration and help some find solace in the soothing words or rhythm of a poem which can help calm inner turmoil. Bibliotherapy uses books, fiction, short stories, poetry, fragments, readings, quotes and texts to help people with mental health difficulties.

— Barney Eden

Reading allows us to momentarily take on another identity, another person's skin, mind, body and soul and truly put ourselves in someone else's shoes.

—Bijal Shah

Bibliotherapy is an old concept in library science. According to the Greek historian Diodorus Siculus, in his monumental work *Bibliotheca historica*, there was a phrase above the entrance to the royal chamber where books were stored by King Ramses II of Egypt. Considered to be the oldest known library motto in the world, ψυχῆσ Ιατπειον, is translated: 'the house of healing for the soul'. Galen, the extraordinary philosopher and physician to Marcus Aurelius of Rome, maintained a medical library in the first century A.D., used not only by himself but by the staff of the Sanctuary Asclepion, a Roman spa famous for its therapeutic waters and considered to be one of the first hospital centers in the world. As far back as 1272, the Koran was prescribed reading in the Al-Mansur Hospital in Cairo as medical treatment.

In the early nineteenth century, Benjamin Rush favored the use of literature in hospitals for both the 'amusement and instruction of patients'. By the middle of the century, Minson Galt II wrote on the uses of bibliotherapy in mental institutions, and by 1900 libraries were an important part of European psychiatric institutions. After the term bibliotherapy was coined by Samuel Crothers in an August 1916 *Atlantic Monthly* article, it eventually found its way into the medical lexicon. During World War I, the Library War Service stationed librarians in military hospitals, where they dispensed books to patients and developed the emerging 'science' of bibliotherapy with hospital physicians.

—*Wikipedia*

Bibliotherapy sets out to improve troubled lives by offering advice to individuals on how books can help them. It seizes on the well-known ability of certain books to change us and turns that into a conscious effort to heal. In an informal way it expands the normally private drama of reading to include two people, therapist and client.

—Robert Fulford

Bibliotherapy: The use of books selected on the basis of content in a planned reading program designed to facilitate the recovery of patients suffering from mental illness or emotional disturbance. Ideally, the process occurs in three phases: personal identification of the reader with a particular character in the recommended work, resulting in psychological catharsis, which leads to rational insight concerning the relevance of the solution suggested in the text to the reader's own experience.

—*The Online Dictionary  
for Library and  
Information  
Science*

Books are evergreen friends, intelligent, counsellors, faithful teachers and promise lifelong companionship. They are your most valuable assets.

—Bijal Shah

A book enters the life of an individual, a deep relation is formed, and the person changes in some significant way.

—Stephen Bonnycastle

I read *The Bell Jar* after a really rough patch in my life. It comforted me more than anything else my family told me. While they mean well and I appreciate them, they have no knowledge of what it's really like to live with anxiety or depression. Reading Plath helped me better understand myself and gain perspective.

—Leyva

A book should help us either to enjoy life or to endure it.

—Samuel Johnson

Bibliotherapy means different things to many different people. Claudia E. Cornett and Charles F. Cornett define bibliotherapy as a basically simple idea: the use of books to help people. Terry Shepard and Lynn B. Iles define it as helping a pupil find a book that might help the pupil solve a personal problem, develop skills needed for living, and/or bolster self-image. Miles V. Zintz and Zelda R. Maggart write that the term literally means therapy through books. All of these definitions assume that more than just reading for pleasure takes place as one reads a book. If children who are experiencing difficulties can read about others who have solved similar problems, they may see alternatives for themselves. By presenting possible solutions, books can help prevent some difficult situations from becoming full-blown problems. Through encountering frustrations and anxieties, hopes and disappointments, successes and failures in fictional situations, youngsters may gain insights applicable to situations they meet in real life.

—Richard White



## **A BIBLIOTHERAPIST SHOULD HAVE THE FOLLOWING SKILLS:**

- Ability to determine the needs and interests of the individual.
- Ability to provide books at the appropriate interest and difficulty levels.
- Ability to evaluate books for the purpose they will serve in bibliotherapy.
- Ability to ask a variety of appropriate questions to encourage the individual to verbalize.
- Ability to use ‘seconds of silence’ and patience to wait for responses after questions have been raised.
- Ability to be a good listener and to communicate effectively.
- Ability to weigh carefully the balance between interaction strategies and additional materials to help individuals reach the insight stage.
- Ability find additional sources of help when appropriate.

— Claudia. E. Cornett  
and Charles. F.  
Cornett

Rich literature is an effective antidote to the intrinsic impulsiveness of adolescents, especially in an electronic era. If it is true that the medium is often the message, curricula that depend on careful reading and thoughtful conversation are powerful models for the responsible, informed, respectful communication essential to all healthy human relationships. In addition, literature-based education shows students that art is not an irrelevant pastime typically reserved for Sunday afternoons. On the contrary, fine literature etches life’s complexities clearly and when well taught inspires us to discover wisdom for our own lives....good teachers connect ideas in literature to choices in real life. Conversations begun in the classroom but expanded to include parents, other adults, and friends who are not classmates help teenagers come to appreciate the value of collective wisdom. It also helps them realize that we continue to grapple with the intricacies of relationships throughout adulthood and that the potential rewards are worth the effort. As students consider the connections to their own lives, the story can remain a sanctuary. Talking about fictional characters and events affords a measure of safety but can address very personal issues.

—Stephan Elenwood and  
Nancy McLaren

Literature has the ability to break into the sense of individual isolation that so often induces moral apathy and meism. By giving students an awareness that they are part of a larger community, it reassures them that they alone do not carry the burden of certain thoughts, ideas and feelings.

—Susan R. Parr

The word bibliotherapy first appeared in 1930, in an article by G. O. Ireland in *Modern Hospital*. Other names applied to this therapy have been biblioprophyllasis and therapeutic reading. In the United States, the Menningers were among the first to foster interest in this new aid to healing. In 1937, Dr. Will Menninger wrote *The Prescription of Literature* and later Dr. Karl added *A Guide to Psychiatric Books*. Providing a case for bibliotherapy, Dr. Karl notes that Robert Downs issued *Books That Changed the World* and states, 'Since we know that many books have in many different ways changed the thinking 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.

—Dr. William S. O'Bruba  
and Dr. Donald A.  
Camplese

Bibliotherapy as a preventive approach is concerned with the technique in which a teacher attempts to solve a child's problem by brining him a similar experience vicariously through books. Through recognition of the problem and its solution in literature, the individual gains insight into his own problems and presumably is then able to take a step toward solving it.

The theory of preventive bibliotherapy can be expressed in three points.

- All children and adolescents face certain types of problems.
- By reading and developing a sane attitude, youngsters are better prepared to make a satisfactory adjustment when similar problems arise.
- A little vicarious injection of experience with a problem in a book is to prevent a bad case of this same kind of experience in the young readers' development.

—Dr. William S. O'Bruba  
and Dr. Donald A.  
Camplese

If we can give children and young people proper principles of conduct, we can alter their behavior and make it more desirable. One of the best ways of implanting desirable ideas is gained from books. Children need a discussion of books to see the application of the situation in these books to their own problems....It must be understood that in using bibliotherapy as another way of encouraging children's use of books in influencing behavior, that most children in the classroom are not seriously maladjusted nor is the teacher a qualified therapist. But it may serve as another technique of getting close to a child, helping him to achieve a greater degree of maturity, along with developing the ability to verbalize his concerns.

—Dr. Thomas Verner  
Moore

Books may indeed ‘minister to a mind diseased’ and come to the aid of the doctor and even precede him.

—Dr. Karl Menninger

Books are dynamic and vital, capable of changing the whole direction of events; sometimes for good, sometimes for evil. Throughout history, there is ample evidence that books are not inanimate, peaceful articles belonging to the cloistered shades and academic quiet of monasteries, universities, and other retreats from an evil, materialistic world.

The incidence of book burnings, banishment and murder of writers, and the suppression of ideas and opposition by dictators down through the ages to the present, bear mute testimony to the power—the explosive forces pent up in books.

—Archie L. Lejeune

*The Prince*, which has been a best seller for over 400 years, was written by Machiavelli for the express purpose of freeing his beloved Italy from foreign aggression; England was ready for a vast expansion of her commercial and industrial economy when Adam Smith wrote *The Wealth of Nations*; Thomas Paine’s *Common Sense* triggered the American Revolution; Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* did likewise for the Civil War; Karl Marx’s *Das Kapital* described the capitalistic system as he found it in 19th Century England and his doctrines propounded therein have long since had the official force of a religion in the Communist World; Henry David Thoreau’s essay *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience* ultimately was to provide the inspiration and impetus of the non-violent resistance movement of Ghandi in India and Martin Luther King in the United States; and last but by no means least, Adolph Hitler’s *Mein Kampf* became the philosophy of millions of people in the late 1930’s. Five million copies of Hitler’s book were sold in Germany in 1939 and who knows how many copies of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* have been sold since its release!

Obviously, these books carried messages of a highly emotional nature, appealing to untold millions of people—sometimes the influence was beneficent and sometimes evil. Clearly, books can be forces of both good and bad—they are, as well, dynamic and powerful instruments, tools, or weapons.

—Archie L. Lejeune

In the literary arsenal of the Counselor, books may serve the following purposes in the lives of young people:

Locating information necessary to the solution of personal problems.

Identifying, extending, and intensifying their interest.

Giving young people an awareness of themselves and others.

Furnishing emotional release or satisfaction.

Inducing intellectual curiosity and reflective thinking.  
Developing social insight through the reinforcement of challenging of attitudes.  
Giving opportunity for re-examination of a sense of values.  
Providing aesthetic experience.  
Developing critical appreciation of books, magazines, and newspapers.  
Giving a sense of belonging to the culture.  
Furnishing recreation through pure enjoyment and entertainment.  
Nothing the adolescent or child learns is likely to serve him so well as the love of books and the ability to use them.

—Archie L. Lejeune

Since books can provide a source of psychological relief from the various pressures and concerns that stem from things that happen to children, the Counselor may use Bibliocounseling in one of two ways:

First, he may attempt to solve an individual's actual and existing emotional problems and pressures by bringing him a similar experience vicariously through books. Recognition and understanding of a problem and its solution in literature provides the individual with insights into his own problems and presumably is then able to take steps toward solving them.

Second, he may use literature for preventing a particular problem from becoming a 'hard case.' The theory being here that a child is able to make a satisfactory adjustment when a problem eventually arises in his own life because he met one similar to that which was depicted in the literature he read in the past. (This is somewhat analogous to that of inoculation to prevent a contagious disease.)

—Archie L. Lejeune

If you have ever felt warm, weepy, excited, or renewed after reading a book, then you have experienced a form of bibliotherapy. We've all laughed and cried as our favorite characters succeeded and failed, because good literature is built on life itself—and life's not always easy! But once in awhile a particular book or passage from a book touches us, and we are never the same again. Life is fuller as a result of these moments, but such insightful occasions are rare. Happening upon a book that deals fictionally or factually with immediate emotional, intellectual, social, and even physical needs is like finding a four-leaf clover.

—Claudia E. Cornett and  
Charles F. Cornett

Bibliotherapy is the process of using books to teach those receiving medical care about their conditions.

— Samuel Carothers  
(1916)

Bibliotherapy is a process of dynamic interaction between the personality of the reader and literature—interaction which may be utilized for personality assessment, adjustment, and growth.

—David Russell and  
Caroline Shrodes  
(1950)

The ancient practice of inscribing lofty statements on the entrances to libraries provides another historic example of the early recognition of how books could be used to help fulfill human needs. An epigraph on the library founded in Alexandria about 300 B.C. read, 'Medicine for the Mind.' The library at Thebes in ancient Greece was dedicated to the 'Healing of the Soul.' The medieval Abbey Library of Saint Gall in Switzerland carries the inscription, 'Medicine Chest for the Soul.'

—Claudia E. Cornett and  
Charles F. Cornett

The bibliotherapeutic process has been found to have the following effects on readers:

Affective Changes (attitudes, values, emotions)

- Promotes empathy
- Creates positive attitudes
- Produces personal and social adjustment
- Develops positive self-image
- Relieves emotional pressures
- Develops new interests
- Promotes tolerance, respect, and acceptance of others
- Encourages realization that there is good in all people
- Helps reader to identify socially accepted behaviors
- Stimulates the examination of moral values, which results in character development
- Creates a desire to emulate models

Cognitive changes (intellectual, reasoning, thinking)

- Stimulates critical thinking, such as analysis, drawing conclusions and implications, making decisions, solving problems, making judgments
- Gives perspective to problems so that they can be put into proper proportion; reader sees universality of problems
- Provides vicarious experiences
- Provides insight into human behavior and motives
- Develops in the reader the ability for self-evaluation

- Challenges readers to consider higher-level reasoning
- Encourages planning before taking a course of action
- Permits discussion on an impersonal level
- Reveals that problems have many alternative solutions and individuals have choices in solving problems

In summary, through bibliotherapy cognitive and affective changes occur in the reader that enable him or her to fully or partially satisfy an unfulfilled need. Through bibliotherapy young people can be helped to cope with a multitude of problems.

—Claudia E. Cornett and  
Charles F. Cornett

Bibliotherapy is psychology through literature-reading that is used to help solve or prevent problems.

—Adolph Stadel (1964)

Bibliotherapy is therapeutic reading in which children find duplications of their own problems and observe how children similar to themselves face their difficulties.

—Matilda Bailey (1964)

Bibliotherapy is defined as an interaction between the reader and certain literature which is useful in aiding personal adjustment.

—Barbara Lindeman and  
Martin King (1968)

Bibliotherapy is getting the right book to the right child at the right time about the right problem.

—Sara Lundsteen (1972)

Bibliotherapy is a family of techniques for structuring interaction between a facilitator and a participant . . . based on their mutual sharing of literature.

— F. M. Berry (1978)

Bibliotherapy is the use of literature...to help me through difficult situations, feelings and thought-processes and to allow me to appreciate the beauty of words and skilled writing.

—Lucy Horner (2013)

I would define bibliotherapy as...

A sure-fire way to get to know yourself

One of the easiest ways to relate to others when you feel isolated

Something that allows you to be inspired by others...

Yet to also learn from their mistakes

The result of reclining on a sun lounger with a trashy novel

Or, sitting in a well-supported reading chair and learning from history's finest minds

A process highly linked to that incredible feeling of reading the last paragraph of a great book

The simple way you can be changed by words next to words on paper

The consequence of challenging, beautiful or iconic lives documented in text

A perpetual legacy that authors can share long after their passing

Something that must be accompanied by a good cup of tea

Not always a relaxing or welcome process, but one that is sometimes harsh and uncomfortable

A way to get your thinking back on track when you feel anxious or upset

Often born in a good bookshop

A lifelong companion and provider of guidance to all those who welcome it

Open entirely to interpretation.

—Lucy Horner (2013)

In the large body children's literature...many resources can be found for fostering the moral growth of young people. To prepare children to think critically about ethical concerns, schools should emphasize the thoughtful reading of such literature....Well-trained teachers, who understand the needs of students and who value literature, can identify appropriate books and develop creative critical-thinking activities based on them. Every time a story is read aloud or a novel discussed, such teachers are fostering moral education.

Recent research has shown the effectiveness of using literature and structured discussions of moral dilemmas to stimulate the growth of children's moral judgment. Indeed, the value of literature in enriching the lives of children is manifold. Above all, books provide pleasure and insight. The narrative patterns of storytelling reflect an ordered way life. And by imaginatively entering the fictional worlds created by talented authors, children come to perceive their own environment and other people in fresh ways.

Through the vicarious experiences reading offers, children can see and feel how others have lived, and understand how they have dealt with the universal questions of life.

And stories can become quests for self-discovery. Facing the conflicts and dilemmas posed by a given tale, the young reader postulates fundamental questions: ‘Who am I?’ ‘What is my place in the world?’ ‘How can I make this a better world?’

—Jerry Watson

Do we want our children to know what honesty means? Then we might teach them about Abe Lincoln walking three miles to return six cents and, conversely, about Aesop’s shepherd boy who cried wolf.

Do we want our children to know what courage means? Then we might teach them about Joan of Arc, Horatius at the Bridge, Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad.

Do we want them to know about kindness and compassion, and their opposites? Then they should read *A Christmas Carol* and *The Diary of Anne Frank* and, later on, *King Lear*.

—William Bennett

Educators and librarians know that for a child to learn well, and to succeed in interpersonal relationships and handle crises in an acceptable manner, he or she must feel a sense of security and well-being. When children feel their world is crumbling around them, they hardly can be expected to function on a high level of emotional response. It is then that literature can give a child insight into his or her situation as well as possible alternatives for solving a personal problem. It is both helpful and rewarding when readers can actually ‘see’ themselves in a story or poem. Therefore, recognizing a child’s need is an important first step in selecting and suggesting materials for reading or listening, if that material is to help in a particular situation.

—Linda B. Hendrickson

The comic book as we know it today was birthed as a secondary showcase for popular newspaper comic strips. The medium’s appeal was immediate, and by the early 1940s comic books flooded newsstands. The ’40s was arguably the most important era in comic book history because the medium invented itself as it went along. Many comic books back then were dreck, but there were also gems, such as Bill Finger’s early stories for Batman and the Green Lantern.

—Don Vaughan

Children’s and YA books are about being brave and kind, about learning wisdom and love, about that journey into and through maturity that we all keep starting, and starting again, no matter how old we get. I think that’s why so many adults read YA: we’re never done coming of age.

—Betsy Cornwell



Too many adults wish to ‘protect’ teenagers when they should be stimulating them to read of life as it is lived.

—Margaret A. Edwards

I bet if you look at the average teenager and the average adult, the average teenager has read more books in the last year than the average adult. Now of course the adult would be all like, ‘I’m busy, I got a job, I got stuff to do.’ WHATEVER! READ! I mean, you’re watching *CSI: Miami*. Why would you be watching *CSI: Miami*, when you could be READING *CSI: Miami*, the novelization?

—John Green

What you are, as a teenager, is a small, silver, empty rocket. And you use loud music as fuel, and then the information in books as maps and coordinates, to tell you where you’re going.

—Caitlin Moran

I lived between my music and books, on the whole a rather unwholesome life for a boy to lead. I dwelt in a world of imagination, of dreams and air castles—the kind of atmosphere that sometimes nourishes a genius, more often men unfitted for the practical struggles of life.

—James Weldon Johnson

I read a lot of comic books and any kind of thing I could find. One day, a teacher found me. She grabbed my comic book and tore it up. I was really upset, but then she brought in a pile of books from her own library. That was the best thing that ever happened to me.

—Walter Dean Myers

As a kid, I lived almost entirely inside books, and eventually the books started returning the favor. A lot of my internal world feels like an anthology, or a library. It’s eclectic and disorganized, but I can browse in it, and that hugely shapes both what and how I write.

—Kathryn Schulz

Any book that helps a child to form a habit of reading, to make reading one of his deep and continuing needs, is good for him.

— Maya Angelou

Some say they get lost in books, but I find myself, again and again, in the pages of a good book. Humanly speaking, there is no greater teacher, no greater therapist, no greater healer of the soul, than a well-stocked library.

— L. R. Knost

The library knows that it is a temporary fix. We have a stamp for the inside front cover: BROKEN SPINE NOTED. It is like a bracelet worn by a diabetic. When you return the book with this message stamped inside, we know you're not the one responsible for this horrible thing. It was some other bastard before you. The book has a preexisting condition.

—Don Borchert

The library had become her solace. Her refuge. Books did not question or judge. They made safe companions.

—Inglath Cooper

Louis Untermeyer's *Modern American Poetry*, first published in 1919, was recently revised to keep it up to date and was a perennial best seller. My 1942 edition, for example, had been reprinted five times by 1945. My edition of Oscar Williams's *A Pocket Book of Modern Poetry* and been reprinted nineteen times in fourteen years. Untermeyer and Williams prided themselves on keeping their anthologies broad-based and timely. They tried to represent the best of what was being published. Each edition added new poems and poets and dropped older ones. The public appreciated their efforts. Poetry anthologies were an indispensable part of any serious reader's library. Random House's popular Modern Library series, for example, included not one but two anthologies—Selden Rodman's *A New Anthology of Modern Poetry* and Conrad Aiken's *Twentieth Century American Poetry*. All these collections were read and reread by a diverse public. Favorite poems were memorized. Difficult authors like Eliot and Thomas were actively discussed and debated. Poetry mattered outside the classroom.

—Mark Edmundson

The quote has traditionally been relegated to a small corner of our literary appreciation—in volumes of high-level anthologies destined to collect dust on the shelf. Readers of quote books have always turned to these volumes of classical wit and ideology for little more than moments of idle amusement, or, at best, reference. Seldom, if ever, has a book of quotations reflected its own time or been read cover-to-cover, much as one would read an absorbing novel.

Today, however, as a result of the general cultural awakening...and the pervading influence of multi-media in our society, we no longer need to wait for the future to understand the impact of the present. Instead, we readily turn to the words of our contemporary philosophers...for our understanding of ourselves and our experiences in the world around us. Their instamatic expressions have drawn the quotation out of its conner and into the foreground of print.

—Barbara Rowes

Quotations have been collected as aids to achieving a successful, good, and long life since time immemorial. A quotation book dating from 25th-century B.C. Egypt tells us: 'He whom God loves is a listener, but he whom God hates cannot hear.' This is as true today as it was 4,500 years ago—though it is impossible to verify the author's claim that by living in accordance with the precepts in his book he had reached the age of 110....The Elizabethans were much given to filling up notebooks with quotations and quaint sayings, plus an odd recipe, picture, poem, or other pleasant or edifying extract thrown in for good measure. They called these compilations 'commonplace-books.'

—*Reader's Digest*  
*Association*

Books are the treasured wealth of the world and the fit inheritance of generations and nations. Their authors are a natural and irresistible aristocracy in every society, and, more than kings and emperors, exert an influence on mankind.

—Henry David Thoreau

A library is many things. It's a place to go if you want to sit and think. It is a place where books live, and where you can get in touch with other people, and other thoughts, through books. Books hold most of the secrets of the world, most of the thoughts that men and women have had. And when you are reading a book, you and the author are alone together—just the two of you. 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

To quote the answer which Anatole France gave to a philistine who admired his library and then finished with the standard question, 'And you have read all these books, Monsieur France?' 'Not one-tenth of them. I don't suppose you use your Sevres china every day?'

—Walter Benjamin

John Armato, a Public relations executive, cherishes his growing Library of Candidates. When people ask him if he's actually read all those books, he asks them if they've actually eaten all the food in their kitchen. 'It is good to put up a supply of books; it increases the odds that you'll have what you want when you're hungry for it,' he says.

—Steve Leveen

Some books you never get over, like a first love. Some books that made an enormous impression on you when you were young you are afraid to read again years later, like being sorry you met that former love for coffee, because you couldn't see what you once saw. But there are those few books that can still move you in the old, throbbing way.

—Darryl Pinckney

A man who has not read Homer is like a man who has not seen the ocean. There is a great object of which he has no idea.

—Walter Bagehot

It's remarkable that a device, which fits in your pocket, can hold thousands of books. But a room full of books is an entirely different kind of remarkable.

—Brandt Legg

Someone has said of books that they are our 'amplest heritages' of thought, and so they are. That doesn't necessarily mean that they must be learned or profound. They are food for the mind and different minds require different foods; everyone is better for variety. Whatever stimulates the mind feeds it, be it fact, fiction or fable. That is where our responsibility lies ; in knowing what builds good mental blood and brawn, and in dispensing that only. Don't ever let yourself think you haven't time to read.

—Mary Virginia Provines

A library's function is to give the public in the quickest and cheapest way: information, inspiration, and recreation. If a better way than the book can be found, we should use it.

—Melvil Dewey

A bookshop is not like a railway booking-office which one approaches knowing what one wants. One should enter it vaguely, almost in a dream, and allow what is there freely to attract and influence the eye. To walk the rounds of the bookshops, dipping in as curiosity dictates, should be an afternoon's entertainment.

—Richard  
Davenport-Hines

I never got into the library thing. I always liked that I could put my hand on a book when I wanted it. And to know I owned them; that was important too.

—Deborah Meyler

All the answers you seek in life. It is hidden in a book.

Lailah Gifty Akita

Books are ideas. They should be able to circulate freely within society. At no price at all, or for pennies. Knowledge is universal. It belongs to all of us.

—Gioconda Belli

When I look at and study the ranks of my books—for I have put the name of each author on the binding—I feel as if I am looking at the holy graves of those who wrote them.

—Pietro Candido  
Decembrio

Organizing the books was a fun afternoon. We decided to put the thick hardback books, mostly intro. to philosophy textbooks and Norton literature anthologies, on the top shelves where they looked good but stayed out of reach since there's no reason for opening them ever again. Then we went by genre: mysteries, cozies, modernists, mountains, sci-fi, beloved childhood volumes, books we bought abroad, books required in school we couldn't sell back, books bought for us we'll read soon, books bought for us we have no intention of reading, books we want to read but are too long for a commitment with our current schedules... We're not really done with this organization, and I doubt we ever will be, but that's one great part about it.

—Joshua Isard

It was immediately clear that the book had been undisturbed for a very long time, perhaps even since it had been laid to rest. The librarian fetched a checked duster, and wiped away the dust, a black, thick, tenacious Victorian dust, a dust composed of smoke and fog particles accumulated before the Clean Air acts.

— A. S. Byatt

This is a place of mystery, Daniel, a sanctuary. Every book, every volume you see here, has a soul. The soul of the person who wrote it and of those who read it and lived and dreamed with it. Every time a book changes hands, every time someone runs his eyes down its pages, its spirit grows and strengthens. This place was already ancient when my father brought me here for the first time, many years ago. Perhaps as old as the city itself. Nobody knows for certain how long it has existed, or who created it. I will tell you what my father told me, though. When a library disappears, or a bookshop closes down, when a book is consigned to oblivion, those of us who know this place, its guardians, make sure that it gets here. In this place, books no longer remembered by anyone, books that are lost in time, live forever, waiting for the day when they will reach a new reader's hands. In the shop we buy and sell them, but in truth books have no owner. Every book you see here has been somebody's best friend.

—Carlos Ruiz Zafón

The boy was a model pupil, forgettable and easily forgotten, and he spent much of his spare time in the back of the English class where there were shelves of old paperbacks, and in the school library, a large room filled with books and old armchairs, where he read stories as enthusiastically as some children ate.

—Neil Gaiman

The only way to educate oneself is by making books a life companion.

—Michael Bassey  
Johnson

Books are what teach you about life. Books teach you about empathy. But you can't buy books if you can't even afford to make rent. That's why libraries are a vital resource. You shut a library, you don't just shut down a building. You shut down hope.

—Jojo Moyes

Sometimes I fantasize about getting my hands on my library records. . . my recurring bookworm dream is to peruse my personal library history like it's a historical document.

My bookshelves show me the books I've bought or been given. . . But my library books come into my house and go out again, leaving behind only memories and a jotted line in a journal (if I'm lucky). I long for a list that captures these ephemeral reads—all the books I've borrowed in a lifetime of reading, from last week's armful spanning back to when I was a seven-year-old kid with my first library card. I don't need many details—just the titles and dates would be fine—but oh, how I'd love to see them.

Those records preserve what my memory has not. I remember the highlights of my grade-school checkouts, but much is lost to time. How I'd love to see the complete list of what I chose to read in second grade, or sixth, or tenth.

—Anne Bogel

The room is warm and smells like dust, and just the presence of so many books makes it easier to breathe. It's remarkable how being around books, even those you've never read, can have a calming effect, like walking into a crowded party and finding it full of people you know.

—Mackenzi Lee

The library is a whispering post. You don't need to take a book off a shelf to know there is a voice inside that is waiting to speak to you, and behind that was someone who truly believed that if he or she spoke, someone would listen.

—Susan Orlean

Books beat boredom.

—Mo Willems

When Dody flicked on the light switch, her room leapt to greet her, bright, welcoming, with its grass-green carpet and the two great book-cases full of books she had bought on her book allowance and might never read, not until she had a year of nothing to do but sit, with a locked door, and food hoisted up by pulleys, and then she might read through them.

—Sylvia Plath

The lack of books...is stunting to the soul.

—Arthur Davison Ficke

### **BABY BOOK**

A book is brick to a baby.  
A bulky, baffling, block.  
Lick it, kick it,  
Poke it, stroke it.  
Riddles thrive inside,  
Unidentified.

—Dan L. Miller