

The Importance of Reading

“Reading and comprehension is cool ”

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Remember last year’s cool Christmas gift? Do you think it is still cool? Probably not! Everything changes and today that change happens very fast. For example, the iPod is now super slim and plays video. The Xbox offers so much more than the previous version. Think of a few things that have changed over the last year.

So how do you learn about these trends and developments? Some people wait to hear about it from friends. Those people are the followers. Everyday the follower hopes someone shares something cool with him so he can tell someone else and (maybe) look cool himself. The *real* cool kids are the ones who *read* and *report* the trends. They are the leaders. To be a business or community leader you must seek, read and comprehend lots of information daily. Reading is more important today than it ever was.

Start with Short Articles

So how do you do it? It might seem like a lot to seek, read and comprehend something everyday. That’s why developing good comprehension and speed-reading skills are important. Reading editorials, reviews and short articles is a good place to start. These pieces tend to have good structure with an introduction, a body and a conclusion – just as you are taught in school.

Predict What Will Be Told

Before you begin reading, anticipate what the author is going to share with you. Read the first and last paragraphs and make predictions about what the body of the story will tell you. When you are finished reading, you will be able to answer: What is the author trying to share? What is the tone of the article? Was there strong supporting material?

Expand your Vocabulary

When you encounter a new word it can really slow you down. Take the time to look up the word in a dictionary. The more you improve your vocabulary the quicker you can pick up information. Concentrate on roots, prefixes and endings. Carry a pocket dictionary with you or keep a list of words that you are unsure of their meaning to look up later. A little effort to learn a word pays off with better reading and comprehension skills.

Don’t be Overwhelmed

When you seek information, you might feel overwhelmed with how much information is out there. The more you practice reading the less overwhelming it will become. Yes, practice reading just like you practice piano, basketball or a foreign language.

Read Something Interesting

If you want to improve your reading and comprehension then seek information that interests you. This is stuff that you want to learn about so you can share with others. What do you enjoy watching on TV? What do you enjoy in your free time? What are your hobbies? There is so much information out there that you can surely find many articles that pertain to your interests.

Share With Others

Share what you read with others. Parents and other adults are usually very interested to hear about something you read. It’s a funny thing but when they hear the words “I read this today and wanted to share...” is much more impressive than “guess what I saw on TV...”

Enjoy Reading

Soon speed reading and comprehending will become second nature. When this happens, you’ll find that you really enjoy reading. You’ll be the leader. It is true when people say: “**LEADERS ARE READERS!**”

Visit the Kid’s Corner at Biz4Kids.com to see tips from Reading Is Fundamental

Reading Is Fundamental, says that through reading you can:

- Become an expert. An expert on any subject you like—from sports stats to spelunking, coins to carburetors, or anything in between.
- Live dangerously. Through reading you can share the challenges, fears, thrills, and achievements of those you're reading about—without the risk.
- Have a few laughs. Sit down with a book by your favorite stand-up comedian, a collection of jokes or cartoons, or a humor magazine.
- See the world. Without leaving your room, you can visit places that fascinate you.
- Travel through time. Explore the frontiers of the Old West or the frontiers of space. Historical fiction and science fiction move you back and forth in time.
- Use your brains. Solve a mystery by figuring out whodunit, outwit a crafty villain, or think yourself out of a perilous situation. Your first clue: look up Mysteries in the library card catalog or ask for detective fiction at a bookstore.
- Get some free advice. Lots of novels feature teenage characters who have problems and pressures like the ones you're dealing with. Check out the Young Adult section of the library or bookstore.
- Discover new interests. Through reading, you may develop an interest in something you knew nothing about before.
- Find a cause. Get smart on an issue that matters to you. Read about people and organizations that support your cause, and get involved.
- Escape. Noise, tension, or boredom getting you down? Give yourself a break. Leave everything behind as you escape into a book.
- Grow up. If you find that you're outgrowing some of the books and magazines written for teens, ask to borrow some of the books and magazines your parents are reading.

Reading Is Fundamental, gives suggestions to find books that interest you:

What they say is true: the more you read, the better you read. In other words, stepping up the reading you do for yourself will make other reading tasks less of a chore.

- So, give reading another chance. Here are some pointers for finding the kinds of books that will interest you personally:
- Decide what you're in the mood for. High adventure? Romance? Perhaps you enjoyed a recent movie or TV mini-series; chances are it was based on a book you'd enjoy also.
- Ask around. Ask friends, a favorite teacher, or your coach to suggest books they enjoyed.
- Check out the library. It won't cost you anything, and the choice is virtually unlimited. Don't be shy about asking a librarian a question like, Do you have any books on rock music?
- Browse in a bookstore. Find the section that interests you—fantasy, cars, computers, or whatever. Treat yourself to an inexpensive paperback, or just have a look around. And don't overlook used bookstores. They are treasure troves for those who like to dig.
- Consult a list of books other teenagers have enjoyed. Ask for a book list at your school or public library, or write for your own (see the Book Lists in the parent part of this brochure).
- Don't judge a book by its cover. What you see on the cover is not necessarily what you get. Read the short reviews printed inside a dust jacket, or skim the first chapter to find out what a book is really about.
- Try a few pages. If the book's not for you, put it aside and try another, until you find a winner.
- Read at your own pace. Reading isn't a contest. So what if you read slowly or skip words here and there? If you're interested, you'll read to the end, and that's what counts. And you'll probably find yourself picking up speed along the way.
- Let one good thing lead to another. When you read something that really speaks to you, you may be sorry to have it end. But the end is never really the end for a person who reads. You can always open another book, and another, and another.