

How can I encourage my son/daughter to read?

Reading is an important skill that all parents need to encourage their children to master. A person who can read is more likely to:

- Succeed in education;
- get a higher paying job or have a wider range of jobs open to them;
- experience the joys of learning new things;
- enjoy the stress-reducing entertainment of a good book.

While it can be harder to turn a teen on to reading than say, a 3-year-old who loves the attention you give when you read him/her a book, it is not anywhere near impossible. Here are a few tried and tested tactics you can use to turn your teen into an avid reader.

Read for enjoyment. The more you model the behaviour you want your teen to do, the more likely he/she is to pick up the behaviour. If you show your teen that reading can be as fun as watching television, instead of just saying it, he/she will be apt to believe it and quite possibly try it. This is especially important for boys: if they see their dads and other male role models reading, they are much more likely to read themselves.

Have books that interest your teen available. If there are no books that your teen is interested in reading in your home, then your teen has no choices available to him/her. Hit the local book fair or secondhand bookshop and stock up. Start off with books that are a similar genre to the kind of films, TV programmes and games that he or she enjoys!

Subscribe your teen to a magazine about his/her interest. Magazine articles are short and fun to read for teens, and yet, it's still reading. A magazine subscription will ensure that your teen has something new to read monthly and will encourage them to branch out for more reading fun.

Play audio books in the car. While this isn't exactly reading – it is enjoying a book. Your teen may not know what it's like to enjoy a story, which is one of the most important reasons to read. Buy an audio book that is part of a series. Then your teen can read the rest of the series.

Spend some quality time at a good book shop. Sometimes young people, even those who are as old as your teen, just like having your attention. Hit the bookshop together, and encourage them to choose a book: it doesn't have to be fiction – autobiographies and other non-fiction books are just as valid for reading as a novel. Remember that the staff in good bookshops are avid readers themselves and will be able to recommend suitable books.

Find out from your son/daughter's English teacher what he or she is reading in class. Encourage him/her to continue to read the same book independently at home.

Purchase a tablet that can download books. This is a great way of combining new technology with reading!