BOOKWORMS

LIFE SKILL
relating to self and others

Why read together?

Reading books can stimulate lively discussions about thoughts, fears, feelings, and experiences. In this activity, you can use books in two ways. You can read aloud together. Or, if no one in the family enjoys reading aloud, try getting a book with an accompanying audiotape (available at your local library).

What do we need?

the public library and librarian or a bookstore; a variety of books or magazines to choose from

How long will it take?

It varies, depending on the ages and attention spans of the children.

What do we do?

Option. Reading Aloud Together

Choose books that will appeal to the ages and interests of family members. Here are some tips to keep in mind:

• When reading to younger children, ask your librarian for books to read, or check out the following resources, which describe books for children at various age levels:


• Don't give up reading aloud just because your child is too big to hold on your lap. Consider these options:

  Children's magazines like Cricket and Cobblestone have many good stories for children aged 5 to 11.

  Reader's Digest, National Geographic, and similar magazines
have interesting topics for children over 12.

If you have a son or daughter in junior high or high school, see if they’ll agree to read aloud from books assigned in English or literature classes.

Find a book that appeals to you and your spouse and try reading to each other at bedtime.

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**Reading aloud can be a pleasurable experience for everyone if these guidelines are followed.**

- Choose a comfortable location that is free from distractions.
- Don’t make everyone feel obligated to read aloud. Some people would rather just listen.
- Pause occasionally to share reactions and observations about the story.
- Don’t overdo it! If people get distracted or fidgety, it’s time to close the book.

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Option. Reading Individually Together

Encourage family members to share the reading habit. Here are some ways you can read individually and still share the experience.

- Take monthly trips to the library so each family member can pick out books that appeal to him.
- Set aside one evening each week for a book or magazine discussion. The discussion could take place during the family’s dinner hour or anywhere the family feels comfortable. Everyone should share:
  - the title and author of the book they’re reading
  - things they especially like about the book or magazine
  - other reactions and comments

- Consider rewarding younger children for reading a certain number of books in a given time period. Stickers, certificates, or other tokens make good “prizes.” Many libraries offer incentive programs to encourage children to read.
What happened?

▼ Describe your new reading experiences.

What did you learn?

▼ What happens when all family members become interested in the same thing at the same time?
▼ Why is it important to talk about the subjects that interest you or share what you've been thinking about?
▼ Why is reading a better family activity than watching TV?

Why was this activity important?

▼ If you read aloud to each other, how did it feel to share that experience?
▼ If you read something separately and talked about it with your family, how did it feel to share that experience?

What's next?

▼ What sort of reading (together or alone) would you like to do in the future?
▼ When you are a parent, what kind of reading activities will you encourage?