It may also be that for some, reading is a pursuit that, like ballet or baseball, simply requires practice. "I think for a lot of people, reading is just something you do," said Paula Heeger, president of the Young Adult Library Association. "You eventually realize you really like it."

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10 Benefits of Reading

- Reading is an active mental process
- Reading improves your vocabulary
- Reading improves your concentration
- Reading builds your self-esteem
- Reading reduces boredom
- Reading improves your creativity
- Reading promotes discussion
- Reading gives you a glimpse into other cultures and places

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Why Read?

Why don’t young people read more? The problem was recently addressed when the National Endowment for the Arts delivered the sobering news that Americans—particularly teenagers and young adults—are reading less for fun. At the same time, reading scores among those who read less are declining, and employers are proclaiming workers deficient in basic reading comprehension skills.

So that’s the bad news. But is all hope gone, or will people still be drawn to the literary landscape? And what is it, exactly, that turns someone into a book lover who keeps coming back for more?

The gestation of a true, committed reader is in some ways a magical process, shaped in part by external forces but also by a spark within the imagination. Having parents who read a lot helps, but is no guarantee. Devoted teachers and librarians can also be influential. But despite the proliferation of book groups and literary blogs, reading is ultimately a private act. “Why people read what they read is a great unknown and personal thing,” said Sara Nelson, editor in chief of the trade magazine Publishers Weekly.

Reading a good book can change a life. “It can be like a drug in a positive way,” said Daniel Goldin, general manager of the Harry W. Schwartz Bookshops in Milwaukee. “If you get the book that makes the person fall in love with reading, they want another one.”

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Best Sellers of 2012

1. Unbroken
   by Laura Hillenbrand

2. The Happiness Project
   by Gretchen Rubin

3. The Help
   by Kathryn Stockett

4. The Hunger Games
   by Suzanne Collins

5. Savages
   By Don Winslow

6. The Glass Castle
   by Jeannette Walls

7. The Big Short
   by Michael Lewis
Reading Tips

There are many ways to improve your reading skills. Each of the following suggestions can put you on the fast track to reading enjoyment.

First - Read something you'll enjoy.
Search Amazon.com for book recommendations, talk to friends for suggestions, read other books by authors you've enjoyed in the past, or explore a library.

Second - Set aside regular time. By training yourself to read at the same times each day, you'll instill a love of reading.
Third - Surround yourself with an abundance of reading materials such as magazines, newspapers, and books.

Fourth - Correct any reading problems you have so your brain isn't slowed by mistakes.

Fifth - Set aside a comfortable spot for reading. Make sure there is plenty of light, a comfortable chair, and few distractions.

Sixth - Keep your mind sharp by supplementing your reading with word games.

Read the book, watch the movie!

Some of the best movies are actually based on books. One way to develop your critical thinking skills is to compare two versions of the same story. Want to kick your reading skills up another notch? Try the closed captioning option on the TV so you can read the text while you watch the movie.

Try this list for starters:

**No Country for Old Men**
(Cormac McCarthy)

**The Godfather**
(Tom Clancy)

**The Color Purple**
(Alice Walker)

**A River Runs Through It**
(Norman Maclean)

**Lord of the Rings**
(J.R.R. Tolkien)

**The Notebook**
(Nicholas Sparks)

Seven habits of great readers:

1. Use prior knowledge
2. Visualize the material
3. Question before, during, and after reading
4. Monitor for meaning (note-taking, etc.)
5. Determine importance
6. Use inferring skills
7. Synthesize information

**MUST READS**

**Take your pick and enjoy!**

**Atlas Shrugged**
(Ayn Rand)

**The Bridge of San Luis Rey**
-Thorton Wilder

**The Color Purple**
(Harper Lee)

**Fried Green Tomatoes**
(Allene T. Frazee)

**The Body / Stand By Me**
(Stephen King)

**Invisible Man**
(Ralph Ellison)

**The Shawshank Redemption**
(Stephen King)

**On the Road**
(Jack Kerouac)

**How to Win Friends and Influence People**
(Dale Carnegie)

**Different Seasons**
(Stephen King)

**The Alchemist**
(Paulo Coelho)