

Supporting Highly-Able & Gifted Readers at Home



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In honor of our topic tonight, throughout this presentation, we'll be using words to talk about words.

Each topic we discuss will be introduced by a quote from an author, expert, reader, or fellow lover of words.

On Raising Readers



There is no substitute for books in the
life of a child.

~ Mary Ellen Chase

I often feel sorry for people who don't
read good books;
they are missing a chance to lead an
extra life.

~ Scott Corbett

Until I feared I would lose it, I never
loved to read.

One does not love breathing.

~ Harper Lee
To Kill a Mockingbird

To read a writer is for me not merely to
get an idea of what he says,
but to go off with him and travel in his
company.

~ André Gide

There should be a little voice in your
head like the storyteller
is saying it. And if there's not, then
you're just lookin' at the words.

~ LaKeisha
(9th Grader in San Francisco)

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

Wear the old coat and
buy the new book.

~ Austin Phelps

The test of literature is,
I suppose, whether we ourselves
live more intensely for the
reading of it.

- Elizabeth Drew

Characteristics of Talented Readers

- ~ large vocabulary
- ~ choose reading
- ~ relatively quick readers
- ~ don't like to stop (good sneak readers)
- ~ read multiple books at the same time
- ~ voracious readers
- ~ read widely (across genre)

“highly-able” = 2 years
above grade level

“precocious” = 4 years
above grade level

How to Support Highly-Able Readers at Home



Read to, for, and with
your children...

... and add “near” to that
list as well.

Access, Access, Access

When I got [my] library card,
that was when my life began.

~ Rita Mae Brown

What Books?

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.

~ Richard McKenna

What Books?

It is not enough to simply teach children to read; we have to give them something worth reading. Something that will stretch their imaginations—something that will help them make sense of their own lives and encourage them to reach out toward people whose lives are quite different from their own.

~ Katherine Paterson
Bridge to Terabithia

What Books?

A classic study by Dole and Adams (1983), surveyed gifted students to elicit their perceptions of the most important attributes of good reading materials. A summary of those findings is included here:

- Sophisticated beginning-to-read books
- Nuanced language - varied and complex language structures
- Multidimensional characters
- Visually inventive picture books
- Playful thinking
- Unusual connections; finding patterns and parallels within and among books
- Abstractions and analogies
- A blend of fantasy and non-fiction
- Extraordinary quantities of information about a favorite topic
- Books about gifted children

Some teacher favorites...

I emailed some teacher friends today, asking for titles of books they feel should not be missed... within minutes I had this list: (random order)

Black Beauty

Where the Red Fern Grows

The Secret Garden

Harold and the Purple Crayon

One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish

The Velveteen Rabbit

Grimm's Fairy Tales

Stone Fox

Love That Dog

Joseph Had a Little Overcoat

Fudge (all)

Humphrey

Love You Forever

From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler

Andrew Henry's Meadow

Sarah Plain and Tall

Little House (series)

Narnia Tales

Indian in the Cupboard

Winnie the Pooh

Dear America (series)

Stuart Little

The Polar Express

Tornado

Curious George

Green Eggs and Ham

Abel's Island

Where the Wild Things Are

Little Women

More teacher favorites...

Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs

The Little Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly

It Looked Like Spilt Milk

Officer Buckle and Gloria

The Napping House

Tuesday

The Mitten

Because of Winn Dixie

The True Story of the Three Little Pigs

If You Give a Mouse a Cookie

No David!

Nate the Great

The Giving Tree

Amelia Bedelia

Misty of Chincoteague

Anne of Green Gables (series)

Ramona

Pippi Longstocking

Shel Silverstein poems

Frog and Toad

Barbar

Shiloh

In 1492

Bridge To Terabithia

Out of the Dust

Fantastic Mr. Fox

Because of Winn Dixie

Watsons Go To Birmingham

Something From Nothing

Tales of a 4th Grade Nothing

Dear Mr. Henshaw

Hoot

Still more teacher favorites...

Knuffle Bunny

Good Night Moon

Silver Packages

Stand Tall, Molly Lou Melon

Mother Goose Rhymes

Holes

The Giver

The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe

Walk Two Moons

Charlotte's Web

The BFG

A Wrinkle in Time

Peter Pan

Wind in the Willows

The Gift of the Magi

The Phantom Tollbooth

Maniac Magee

What Books... Ideas to Open Doors

- ~ Introduce your child to the Book Review section of the paper.
- ~ Talk through book buying decisions together.
- ~ Encourage dabbling in other genre.
- ~ Go to book signings & author events.
- ~ Have the books around the house – the ones you hope she'll read one day. “The Someday Shelf”
- ~ Follow their interests.

What Books and When?

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

- Henry David Thoreau

When...

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

More When...

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

~ E. M. Forster

Should I Make Him Read This?

Reading is not a duty,
and has consequently
no business to be made
disagreeable.

~ Augustine Birrell

To Re-read or Not to Re-read

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

Talk About Books

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

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

What Else Should I Encourage Her To Read?

I read the newspaper avidly.
It is my one form of
continuous fiction.

~ Aneurin Bevan

Help Them to Be Reflective About What They've Read

To read without reflecting is
like eating without digesting.

~ Edmund Burke

Examples of Reflective Questions

During Reading:

What can you tell me about what you're reading?

What's interesting about the characters? Do any of them remind you of yourself or anyone else you know?

How would you feel about being in the setting of this book?

What does your brain feel like while you're reading this book? What pictures and sounds do you have in your mind while you're reading it?

After Reading:

What is the most important thing you learned from this book?

How would you rank this book compared to others you've read?

What do you think the author wanted you to think after reading this?

Do you think you'll read any other books by this author?

What changes would you want to make in the story?

Encourage Them to Read Many Kinds of Writing

(Outward and Upward, Not Just Upward)

~ Fiction

~ Non-Fiction

~ Biographies

~ Newspapers/Articles

~ Reference Books

~ Picture Books

~ Poetry Books

Bill of Rights for Gifted Readers

Gifted readers have the right to...

... read at a pace and level appropriate to readiness without regard to grade placement.

... discuss interpretations, issues, and insights with intellectual peers.

... reread many books and not finish every book.

... use reading to explore new and challenging information and grow intellectually.

... have time to pursue a self-selected topic in depth through reading and writing.

Bill of Rights for Gifted Readers (cont.)

Gifted readers have the right to...

... encounter and apply increasingly advanced vocabulary, word study, and concepts.

... guidance rather than dictation of what is good literature and how to find the best.

... read several books at the same time.

... discuss but not have to defend reading choice and taste.

... to be excused from material already learned.

Another Bill of Rights

The right not to read something.

The right not to finish.

The right to reread.

The right to read anything.

The right to escapism.

The right to read anywhere.

The right to browse.

The right to read out loud.

The right to not defend your tastes.

A Wrap-Up of Strategies to Use at Home

- ~ model, model, model
- ~ access, access, access
- ~ encourage/allow personal choice
- ~ encourage reflection/processing
- ~ talk about books!
- ~ be familiar with what they're reading
- ~ create a reading place – space, sound, light
- ~ use books to connect with cultural identity

When Their Choices Don't Match Your Choices

- ~ talk with her about what's attracting her to that book
- ~ remember, the "too easy" book isn't going to occupy him for long
- ~ examine your intentions
- ~ be the parent
 - model, guide, suggest, & support before you get to the point of "have-to"

A Few Final Thoughts

- ~ Books not to read... not really.
- ~ Reading & Writing
- ~ The Future of Reading
- ~ Reading is a solitary and sedentary activity.
- ~ Collecting books or passing them on?
- ~ Is there such a thing as too much reading?

Banned Books Week

Last week in September!

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

-Ray Bradbury, 1994

Only a generation of readers will span a
generation of writers.

~ Steven Spielberg

By elevating your reading, you will improve
your writing or at least tickle your thinking.

~ William Safire

It is a mistake to think that books have come to stay. The human race did without them for thousands of years and may decide to do without them again.

~ E. M. Forster

A wonderful thing about a book, in contrast to a computer screen, is that you can take it to bed with you.

~ Daniel J. Boorstin

Resources for Parents of Readers

Some of My Best Friends are Books

Halsted

How Reading Changed My Life

Quindlen

Parent's Guide to the Best Books for Children

Lipson

100 Best Books for Children: A Parents' Guide...Silvey

Your handout has these and other resources!

She is too fond of books,
and it has turned her brain.

~ Louisa May Alcott (*1873*)