

Why should we read?

Strengthens Your Brain



- 2013 Emory University measured readers MRI scans.
 - They found that the deeper readers went into the story, the more areas of their brain activated. Even more surprisingly, this activity stayed elevated for several days after participants finished the book.
 - The more you read, the stronger these complex networks of activity become.
- Boston Children's Hospital
 - reading can rewire your brain,
 - create new neural networks, and
 - strengthen the white matter in the corpus callosum, which enhances communication between the two brain hemispheres. This allows you to process information more efficiently, helping you learn faster.
 - strengthens your visual and auditory comprehension, particularly if you're listening to someone read out loud.
- A 2011 study upheld these findings, showing that while starting a reading habit as a child is ideal, you can enjoy these powerful brain benefits at any age.

Reduces Stress

- 2009 Sussex University:
 - reading reduces your stress levels by up to 68%.
 - 6 minutes of being immersed in a book, your heart rate slows, your blood pressure lowers, and your muscles begin to relax.
 - To enjoy the long-term benefits of reading, research suggests that thirty minutes of daily reading dramatically impacts the physical symptoms of stress.
- 2020 study from the Journal of the American Psychological Association
 - parents who read to their children daily from the ages of six to eighteen months had lower stress levels, were more sensitive to their children's needs, and were warmer to their children.

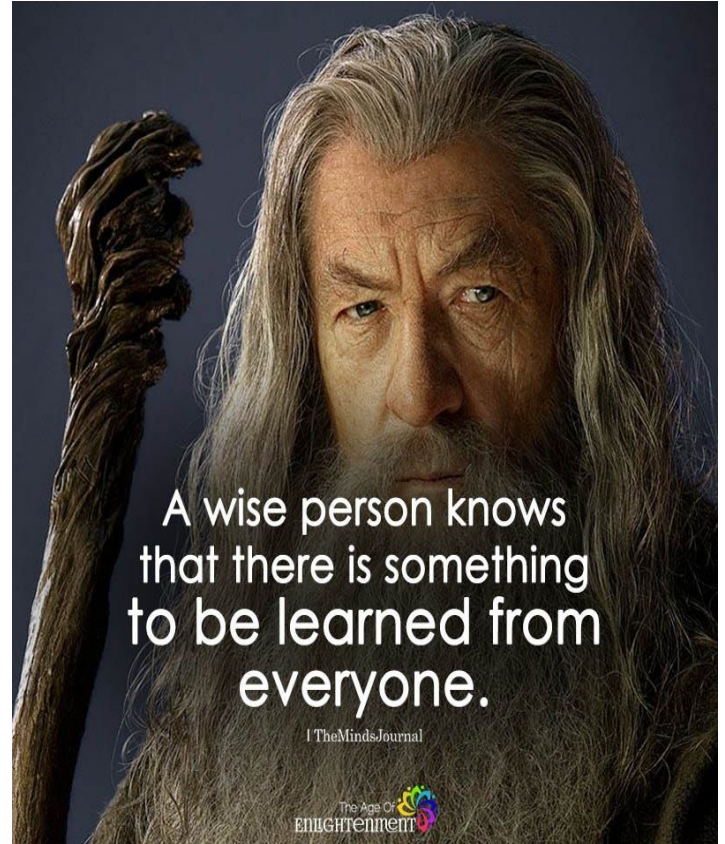


Expands Your Knowledge

“Reading is important because if you can read, you can learn anything about everything and everything about anything.”

A YouTube video can help you understand the topic, but short videos don't allow you to swim into the vast depths of the subject matter.

In fact, while it may be tempting to believe that multimedia can expand or increase learning, research indicates that the positive impact seen from these types of teaching styles are minimal without reading as the core teaching module. Additionally, higher reading comprehension has been correlated with greater scientific literacy.



Enhances Creativity and Imagination

- 2007 Appalachian State University and Angelo State University found that undergraduate college students who read for pleasure had:
 - higher levels of creativity,
 - more positive perceptions of their professors, were eager to learn, and
 - achieved their academic goals easier.
- 2009 study showed a significantly higher correlation in college students who read for pleasure versus creativity than those who didn't.
- Also improves your ability to make decisions.



Improves Memory

Studies show that reading improves memory through constantly engaging your brain. You're working your verbal recall while keeping your short-term and long-term memory activated as you track the information or story line, depending on the type of book. This is episodic memory, but reading also strengthens your working memory, which is your capacity to hold information in your brain while working on different tasks. Both of these types of memory decline as you age and studies have showed that in elderly patients, those who read every day for eight weeks showed significant improvement in both episodic and working memory.

Improves Concentration and Focus

A 2015 Canadian study found that between 2000 and 2015, the average attention span dropped from twelve seconds to an abysmal eight seconds. 77% of participants between 18–24 replied that the first thing they reach for when they have nothing occupying their attention is their phone compared to only 10% of individuals over 65. Another study found that elementary school kids with higher levels of reading comprehension can concentrate on tasks longer and had a higher visual reaction time.

When you block out undistracted reading time, you're exercising your focus and concentration muscles. The longer you stay engaged in the book, the more you're rewarding focus instead of distraction. This will help increase your attention span, making it easier to concentrate on day-to-day tasks. And the more you read, the longer you will train your attention span to be, making it easier to focus on difficult tasks.

Improves Your Vocabulary

A 2015 study from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association studied the vocabulary levels of students from kindergarten to 10th grade. They found that above-average readers had a significantly higher rate of vocabulary growth between 4th grade and 10th grade. Researchers at the Centre for Longitudinal Studies found that adolescents who read for pleasure in their spare time knew 26% more words than their non-reading peers.

Improve Your Communication Skills

The ability to write is located in the parietal lobe, which is activated while reading.

Your brain stores the linguistic style of the books you read, which help you strengthen your ability to communicate clearly, both in written and verbal forms. But it also gives you different perspectives. You gain the ability to see things from someone else's point of view. You encounter new ideas and gain new ways of looking at the world, and that empathy helps you interact more effectively with the people around you.

Improve Your Mental Health

Reading helps you feel connected to the world in a unique way. You can read about characters who are struggling with the same issues you are, and that connection helps you feel visible and less alone. Studies indicate that identifying with a character going through a similar struggle alleviates feelings of isolation and loneliness in individuals. You can also find other people reading similar books that you are, and forge friendships based on your shared hobby. Reading groups and book clubs are fantastic ways to do this.

It builds empathy, which increases your ability to connect with people outside of fictional worlds. Studies continue to show that readers have higher empathy, better social ability, have better perspective, and a clearer understanding of human nature.

Reading is Entertainment

Studies have shown that anticipation is a powerful motivator, and your brain releases more dopamine while you're anticipating an event than the event itself. No wonder so many bibliophiles can't wait to end their day and settle in with a good book.

As far as addictions go, this one is harmless and can help provide endless opportunities to learn and improve, both personally and professionally. In the same way that puzzles are good for the brain, reading keeps your brain active and engaged, which leads to better brain health.

