

## Literacy Tips for Parents of High School Students

There are many ways parents/guardians can support their students' reading development and encourage them to maintain positive reading habits in high school.

### ⇒ Three Components of Reading Support

- Vocabulary—words students must know to communicate and read effectively
- Fluency—the capacity to read text accurately, quickly, and smoothly
- Comprehension—the ability to understand and gain meaning from what has been read

### ⇒ Why is it important to improve reading skills?

- High school students need strong vocabulary skills and reading comprehension skills to perform well on state assessments such as ACT, SAT, WorkKeys, and End of Course exams.
- Having strong reading skills is critical to success in college, careers and in life.

### ⇒ What can parents/guardians do?

#### **Help students increase their vocabulary.**

- Encourage your students to ask about new words they hear or read.
- Students learn new words through verbal interactions with others. Find ways to increase conversation time at home. Adults should make a conscious effort to use more complex language in their conversations with their students.
- Play word games.
- Visit museums, zoos, historical sites and plays. Through these experiences, students will gain exposure to new vocabulary words.
- Provide books and magazines at home.
- Visit the library.

#### **Help students improve reading fluency.**

- Model fluent reading by choosing a section of a book, magazine, or newspaper, and then read it effortlessly and smoothly to your student.
- Try “repeated reading” where you will read a passage and then ask the student to repeat the reading. The student should practice the passage until he/she reads the passage effortlessly.
- Try “echo reading” by reading a line or sentence from a book, and then have the student read the same line, trying to mimic the adult's expression and fluency.

#### **Help support the development of reading comprehension skills.**

- Read the books that your student is assigned so that you can discuss the book and check for comprehension. Encourage your child to be an active reader, which means that reading should be done with one hand on the book and the other holding a pen. Students should note details about characters, whether it's in the book itself or in a separate notebook. Remember the importance of location, location, location. Reading for school should be completed at a desk in room that doesn't have a TV, computer, or cell phone. Reading comprehension for texts that are more challenging requires careful attention and structure.



## Raising Readers: Tips for Parents



# Promoting a Love of Reading at Home for Students in Grades 6-12

Having the “skill” to read is an important part of the equation, but it is not sufficient for developing life-long readers. The other essential ingredient is having the “will” to want to read. In this issue of Raising Readers, I offer a brief rationale for families promoting a joy of reading as well as strategies, activities and routines to help children and teens become lifelong readers who love to read.

Many of the struggling readers I have worked with over the years didn’t read for fun because they saw reading as a chore or an assignment. As a result, they avoided reading, only doing it when absolutely necessary. They then had less practice reading so they did not improve as readers, and they then enjoyed reading less because it was more difficult.

This cycle of the poor reader not reading and then falling farther behind in their reading while the good reader reads

often and continues to improve as a result of the increased practice is referred to as the Matthew Effect (Stanovich, 1986) because the “rich get richer and the poor get poorer” as readers. Therefore, it is important for all readers, including those who struggle, to read often both in and out of school. By reading with children at home, parents can build a love of reading and provide opportunities for reading practice which can contribute to reading growth and enjoyment.

While teachers can do a great deal to help students build their reading skills and to encourage them to develop a love of reading, parents and families play an important role in building lifelong readers. With so many competing demands for children’s time, reading needs to become a habit. Families can give children the valuable gift of being a lifelong reader regardless of the child’s age or present reading skills. Just like eating healthy or exercising regularly, it is important to help children build their “reading health” so that they can become motivated, enthusiastic readers. The following fun and simple activities, strategies and routines can help students in grades 6-12 build their interest and joy for reading, books and learning.



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# What Can Parents Do To Promote a Love of Reading with Children in Grades 6-12?

1. Reading takes many forms. If your teens are more interested in reading online, reading magazines or reading video game manuals than reading novels, take heart; they are still reading! Praise your teens for reading, provide access to the types of things they like to read and encourage them to expand reading interests.
2. Involve your teen in family reading time on a regular basis. Many teens have hectic schedules with homework, extracurricular activities and friends. Try to set aside time at least several nights per week when your whole family reads, including teens.
3. Adolescents are very social and taking group outings as a family or with friends to the bookstore or library will connect that social interest to reading. Many bookstores and libraries have special events for teens such as book clubs, poetry slams or author presentations. In addition, teens enjoy "hanging out" in the bookstore café with their friends reading and discussing books and magazines.
4. Many popular book series for teens have been made into movies such as *Harry Potter*, *Lord of the Rings* and *Twilight*. Encourage your teen to read the book first and then to view the movie to consider which they liked better as well as how the book and movie versions differed.
5. Teens love their smart phones, and many great free reading apps are available such as: Word of the Day, Dictionary.com, Scrabble, e-books and Good Reads (a social networking site for book reviews and recommendations).
6. Many teens tend to spend a great deal of time playing video games. Encourage your family to play word games together such *My Word Coach* and *Word Jong Party*, *Puzzler Collection* and *Puzzle Challenge* for the Wii video game system.
7. Teens are often interested in current events, sports news and entertainment news. Make newspapers (either print or electronic) available to your teen to read about these interests. Some popular topics addressed in teen magazines include entertainment, fashion, sports and video gaming. Consider giving your teen a subscription to a favorite magazine for a gift.
8. Graphic novels have become very popular with teens. Most libraries and bookstores have sections devoted to graphic novels that appeal to teens. The American Library Association publishes lists of the best graphic novels on their website: [ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/booklistsawards/greatgraphicnovelsforteens/gn.cfm](http://ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/booklistsawards/greatgraphicnovelsforteens/gn.cfm).
9. Help your teens find reading materials related to their interests or hobbies. For example, if your teens are interested in music, cooking, art, fashion, video games, basketball, history or technology, help them find books, magazines, websites and other materials to read about these interests.
10. Read a popular novel that interests your teens and discuss it with them. By sharing books, you and your teens can enjoy together, you can help them build a love of reading.
11. Don't nag your teens about reading because doing so will make reading a negative experience for them. Stay positive and keep looking for interesting, appealing materials and opportunities for your teens to read.

## We're here to help

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