

10 Tips for Encouraging Teens to Read

Make sure there's something to read at home. Having books, newspapers, magazines, catalogues etc. on hand around your home may result in random acts of recreational reading. Scanning the Sunday comics over a bowl of cereal is a sign your teen is reading for pleasure.

Find out what other teens read. Reading books popular with other teenagers can give you a sense of what your child might enjoy. It may also give you insight into some of the pressures and concerns facing teens. Ask a bookseller, librarian, or another teen for suggestions.

Allow boys to be (and read like) boys. Studies have shown that many boys (and men) prefer non-fiction to fiction - and some boys may be labeled non-readers just because they don't read novels. So don't despair or be judgmental if your teenaged boy would rather read *Sports Illustrated* than *Pride and Prejudice*. Instead, why not get him a book on extreme skateboarding or a biography of Steve Nash.

Try something new. Encourage a teen who says reading is boring to sample something they haven't tried before. That could be anything from graphic novels or manga, to a manual of car maintenance, or an adult murder mystery.

Share your reading. Comment on something you've read in the newspaper and point out items that might interest your teen. Or leave the paper open at the breakfast table and ask for your child's opinion on a controversial topic or an issue people are talking about.

Lighten up. While you may prefer to see your teenager reading books deserving of the term 'literature', let him/her know that escapist reading has its place, too. And let them know that it's okay to skip pages or not finish a book they aren't enjoying (as long as it isn't for school!)

Lead by example. Continue to practice what you preach. Let your teenager see you with your feet up enjoying a good book. Male role models are particularly important for boys who think reading is nerdy or something only girls do!

Give your teen a gift certificate to a bookstore. A gift certificate gives your teen the opportunity and the means to choose for themselves making it much more likely they will actually read.

Take a cue from your teenager's interests. Look for books and magazines about things or issues your teen is interested in: cars, boats, movies, music, sports they play or watch, fashion, cooking, horses, animal rights, photography, computer and gaming technology, global warming, etc.

Don't give up! Teenagers, for a variety of reasons, sometimes lose interest in reading for a while. Patience and a sense of humor can help see them through.