

17 Reasons Why Everyone Should Read

By Lois R

A reading habit. A habit we should all absolutely have, but so few of us do. But why? It's not a difficult habit, it's enriching, accessible and varied for all tastes, it's something we can all do – with a 99% literacy rate in the UK we don't really have any excuses *not* to read. But with the rise of the internet, many are choosing video games over the written word. So here we go: the reasons for starting – and maintaining – a reading habit.

Reading regularly has been shown to improve your memory, focus, vocabulary, and imagination. It even deepens your empathy! Who wouldn't want those kinda benefits? Reading can literally make you a better human being – not to mention the social bonuses that come from joining reading groups, which in turn can improve your debate skillset! Can someone explain where the downside is?

Honestly, though, it's even super accessible! 90% of the time, a book costs less than £10, but if you want to make this long term, that's not always sustainable, especially if you're living minimalist or low-budget – space and spare cash can be... an issue, in my experience. The options are endless – a Kindle (or the Kindle mobile app), or the library – which around here is free! – or if you don't want to be staring at a page or a screen, there's audiobooks, which can be listened to on a CD player, your mobile, your laptop – all sorts.

Also, there's so much *variety*! Adventure, fantasy (my own personal favourite), thrillers – truly, whether you like sports or spies, there is something for everyone. I was raised on fantasy – the towers and dungeons of Hogwarts and the cobbled-together collage that was the Discworld became my comfort on late nights during my childhood. As I grew older, I diversified, finding joy in crime, dystopia, horror, historical fiction, and the occasional romance. Writing this, I've realized it's probably quite concerning that crime and horror were what I found joy in, but never mind!

Anyway, reading is also one of the best escapes from reality – and with the way reality is looking at the minute, who wouldn't want to escape it? You can explore fantasy worlds, or discover new information, find characters that you grow to love or hate, or even new music! Seriously – I read a series where the author shared the playlist she'd listened to whilst writing the book. I found a few songs that I genuinely loved, and through that expanded my experience of culture as I found artists and bands that I enjoyed.

To sum it all up, reading is great! It can transform your life, reducing mental strain while exercising the muscles in your brain and improving your people skills. You can laugh and cry and love and hate and learn alongside characters, and to top it all off, you can do it all from wherever you want! However you read, whether paperback or eBook, can be fitted into your pocket. So really – can anyone explain the downside?