

3. **READ ALOUD TO ALL AGES.**

Objectives:

- To expose students to excellent writing.
- To demonstrate the joy and benefit of learning to read.

Prepare to Teach:

- Search constantly for quality books.

Reading aloud is one of the most valuable things you can do as a parent or teacher. This verbal practice is more than a pleasurable activity that promotes closeness and nurturing. Students who listen to well-crafted books benefit in many ways.

Demonstrate reading procedures.

Reading aloud provides familiarity with the reading process. Don't be afraid to use your finger to point to the words as you read them. Show the child that English books are read from left to right, top to bottom. Words, not pictures, are read.

Plant the desire for reading in students of any age.

Model a love for books. Constantly hunt for a fresh supply of quality materials and share your delight in some of the worthwhile things you discover. Take frequent trips to bookstores and the library. As soon as a child can write his name, get him his own library card. Hunt for book bargains in garage sales and thrift shops. Let your students observe you read for practical reasons as well as for pleasure. Provide variety: chapter books, picture books, non-fiction, fiction, poetry, and biography.

Inspire future reading success.

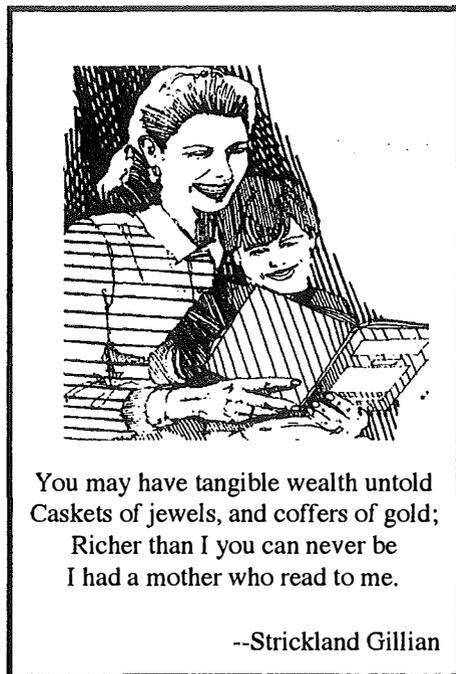
After studying extensive research on literacy, the Commission on Reading reported, "The single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children. This is especially so during the preschool years." (Andersen, p. 23) Phonemic awareness provides the mechanics of reading. Reading aloud helps build the student's common knowledge and provides the motivation to learn.

Stimulate the intellect.

Listening requires a higher level of imagination than watching a video or television. Rather than passively viewing an image on the screen, the listener has to picture the events in her own mind.

Expose powerful ways to express ideas.

The written word presents a higher degree of language excellence than normal conversational speech because a writer takes more time to organize thoughts. The grammar used is more correct and the word choice is richer and less repetitious than in a casual chat with a friend. Reading aloud exposes the student to well-structured sentences which display the textures and nuances of the English language. Students enlarge their vocabularies and gain ideas for developing their own writing styles.



You may have tangible wealth untold
Caskets of jewels, and coffers of gold;
Richer than I you can never be
I had a mother who read to me.

--Strickland Gillian

Some of my fondest memories are of sitting with my mother's arm around me, listening to her read. Little did I know that she was doing much more than providing comfort and entertainment. She was paving the way for learning and for success.

--First Lady, Laura Bush

Expand horizons.

Listening to a book enlarges the student's knowledge about persons, places, and things in the world. Even simple stories for young children provide an amazing array of background information on many varied subjects. Hearing stirring accounts of worthwhile endeavors and noble examples helps mold good character. Through books we gain the benefit of our ancestors' wise and judicious remarks without the fatigue of their long and painful experiments. By this means children may be led, in a great measure, into the wisdom of old age.

Train minds to retell stories.

Have the student repeat in his own words what you read. Such narration sharpens his listening and thinking skills. The ability to verbalize thoughts precedes the ability to write thoughts.

Build valuable shared memories.

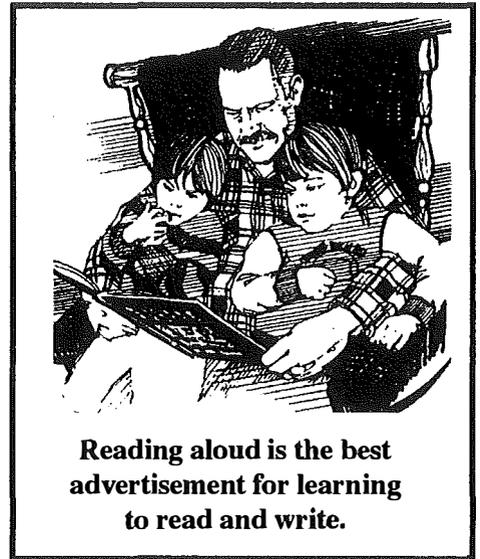
Change your voice to match the characters in the book. Read with expression and feeling. Select books that you enjoy so you will be enthusiastic. Help the listener become actively involved. Ask questions to make sure they are following the story line. Pause to explain words that the listeners might not understand.

As First Lady of the United States, Laura Bush shared, "Some of my fondest memories are of sitting with my mother's arm around me, listening to her read. Little did I know that she was doing much more than providing comfort and entertainment. She was paving the way for learning and for success." (Felix, p. 35)

Motivate the student.

Reading aloud to students is one of the best advertisements for learning to read and write. An internally motivated child will learn more easily than one pushed. Don't restrict read-aloud selections to books marked at a certain grade level. Young children enjoy select, well-written passages from even adult-level books. When my boys were six, five, and one, I read highlights of the story, *Peace Child*. Several years later I saw a big grin on my active son's face as he spotted that inspirational book on the shelf and curled up to read it for himself.

You may want to read longer books a chapter at a time. If someone must wait in suspense for the next reading, she will long for the day when she can read for herself and not have to wait so long. Often, when Dad read to the children at night, our children would beg for one more chapter. Sometimes he would continue. Other times he would close the book. Sometimes he would continue reading silently, meanwhile smiling, laughing, or showing some appropriate emotion to the story unfolding. Then he would promise to read the rest tomorrow. Making them wait to experience what he enjoyed helped stir their desire to do this for themselves without being dependent on him. Half the job of teaching is planting the desire. The other half is showing how.



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