

# Nurturing a Passion for Books and Building a Home Library

Mary Jo Tate  
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## Why read?

*"When you give someone a book, you don't give him just paper, ink, and glue. You give him the possibility of a whole new life."*

~ Christopher Morley (1890-1957,  
American novelist, journalist, and poet)

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## Why read?

*He ate and drank the precious words,  
His spirit grew robust;  
He knew no more that he was poor,  
Nor that his frame was dust.  
He danced along the dingy days,  
And this bequest of wings  
Was but a book. What liberty  
A loosened spirit brings!*

~Emily Dickinson (1830–1886, American poet)

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## Why read?

- Develop your mind.

*“Reading is to the mind  
what exercise is to the body.”*

~ Richard Steele (1672-1729,  
Irish writer and politician)

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## Why read?

- Build vocabulary.
- Learn to write by reading good writers as models.
- Learn grammar by osmosis.

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## Why read?

- Expand your imagination.

*"I am the product of long corridors, empty sunlit rooms, upstairs indoor silences, attics explored in solitude, distant noises of gurgling cisterns and pipes, and the noise of wind under the tiles. Also, of endless books. My father bought all the books he read and never got rid of any of them. There were books in the study, books in the drawing room, books in the cloakroom, books—two deep—in the great bookcase on the landing, books piled as high as my shoulder in the cistern attic, books of all kinds reflecting every transient stage of my parents' interest, books readable and unreadable, books suitable for a child and books most emphatically not. Nothing was forbidden me. In the seemingly endless rainy afternoons I took volume after volume from the shelves. I had always the same certainty of finding a book that was new to me as a man who walks into a field has of finding a new blade of grass."*

~ C. S. Lewis (quoted in *Shelf Life* by George Grant, p. 39)

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## Why read?

- Travel to new places.

*There is no frigate like a book,  
To take us lands away.  
Nor any coursers like a page,  
Of prancing poetry.  
This traverse may the poorest take,  
Without oppress of toll.  
How frugal is the chariot,  
That bears the human soul.*

~ Emily Dickinson (1830–1886, American poet)

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## Why read?

- Develop empathy.

*"Reading fiction is important. It is a vital means of imagining a life other than our own, which in turn makes us more empathetic beings. Following complex story lines stretches our brains beyond the 140 characters of sound-bite thinking, and staying within the world of a novel gives us the ability to be quiet and alone, two skills that are disappearing faster than the polar icecaps."*

~ Ann Patchett (1963– , American novelist)

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## Why read?

- Learn by example—positive and negative

*“Perhaps the greatest gift any father can bestow upon his children, apart from the covenant blessings of parish life and a comprehension of the doctrines of grace, is a passion for reading. It is cheap, it consoles, it distracts, it excites, it gives a knowledge of the world, and it offers experience of a wide kind. Indeed, it is nothing less than a moral illumination.”*

~ Thomas Chalmers (1780–1847, Scottish theologian)

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## Why build a home library?

*“Surround yourself with books to create for yourself a bookish atmosphere. The merely physical side of books is important—more important than it may seem to the inexperienced.”*

~Arnold Bennett, *Literary Taste: How to Form It*

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## Why build a home library?

- Creates an atmosphere for learning
- Building library vs. this year’s curriculum
- Good books going out of print
- Libraries discarding old books
- Political correctness / revisionist history
- Handy resource – “Let’s go look it up!”
- Leave a legacy

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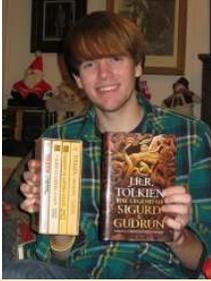
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## Why build a home library?

### ■ Pride of ownership



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## Why build a home library?

*“No man has a right to bring up his children without surrounding them with books, if he has the means to buy them. It is a wrong to his family. He cheats them! Children learn to read by being in the presence of books. The love of knowledge comes with reading and grows upon it. And the love of knowledge, in a young mind, is almost a warrant against the inferior excitement of passions and vices.”*

~ Henry Ward Beecher, *The Sermons of Henry Ward Beecher*, 1870

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## What should we read?

### **Literature**

writings in prose or verse; especially:  
writings having excellence of form or  
expression and expressing ideas of  
permanent or universal interest

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## What should we read?

- 5 fallacies (misconceptions) about literature:
  - We should read something true rather than something fictional.
  - Everything in a work of literature is offered for our approval.
  - We should read only literature with whose viewpoint we agree.
  - A literary work written by a non-Christian cannot tell the truth.
  - Old literature is irrelevant to us today.

~ Leland Ryken, *Realms of Gold: The Classics in Christian Perspective* (pages 3-6)

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## What should we read?

- Avoid:
  - Twaddle
  - Immorality
- Seek out:
  - Classics
  - Living books
  - Authors passionate about their subject
  - Excellent writing
  - Beautiful illustrations
  - Thought-provoking ideas

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## What should we read?

- "Safe" ≠ Good
- Age-appropriate
- All truth is God's truth.

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## What should we read?

*"Therefore, in reading [non-Christian authors], the admirable light of truth displayed in them should remind us, that the human mind, however much fallen and perverted from its original integrity, is still adorned and invested with admirable gifts from its Creator. If we reflect that the Spirit of God is the only fountain of truth, we will be careful, as we would avoid offering insult to him, not to reject or condemn truth wherever it appears. In despising the gifts, we insult the Giver.... Nay, we cannot read the writings of the ancients on these subjects without the highest admiration; an admiration which their excellence will not allow us to withhold. But shall we deem anything to be noble and praiseworthy, without tracing it to the hand of God?"*

~John Calvin, *Institutes*, II.ii.15-16

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## What should we read?

- Great books (classics)
  - Literary excellence
  - Impact on literature and culture
- All great literature involves conflict (sin).
- Examples to avoid and models to emulate
- Every family's standard will differ.

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## What should we read?

- 4 types of stories:
  - Bent (avoid)
  - Broken
  - Whole
  - Healing

~ Oliver Van DeMille, *A Thomas Jefferson Education* (pages 73-74)

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## What should we read?

- **Breadth**

books on a wide variety of topics

- **Depth**

lots of books on a single topic

- **Series**

*Who Should We Then Read?* by Jan Bloom



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## What should we read?

Collect books by and about **favorite authors**.



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## What should we read?

**Avoid extremes:**

- **Slumming**

not being selective enough

- **Snobbing**

being too selective



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## What should we read?

- Mix of challenging and easy

*“There is a great deal of difference between the eager man who wants to read a book and the tired man who wants a book to read.”*

~ George MacDonald (1824–1925, Scottish author and minister)

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## What should we read?

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for a list of my favorite books  
about choosing good books!

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## What should we read?

*“It had been startling and disappointing to me to find out that story books had been written by people, that books were not natural wonders, coming up of themselves like grass. yet regardless of where they came from, I cannot remember a time when I was not in love with them—with the books themselves, cover and binding and the paper they were printed on, with their smell and their weight and with their possession in my arms, captured and carried off to myself. Still illiterate, I was ready for them, committed to all the reading I could give them.”*

~ Eudora Welty, *One Writer's Beginnings* (1984), pages 5–6

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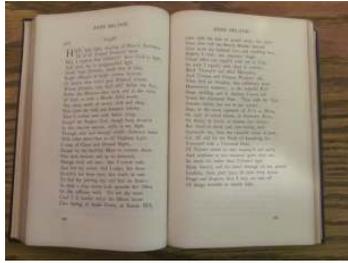
## What should we read?

### Print Books

Books are more than just their content.

*"I like the way the words look on the page. The normal ink print."*

~ Perry Tate, age 13



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## What should we read?

### Print Books – Beauty / Art Objects



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## What should we read?

### ■ Print Books

- Permanence of physical object / artifact
- Curation / preservation of history
- Ownership / personalization
- Smell

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## What should we read?

- Print Books
- Sentiment



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## What should we read?

- Digital Books
  - Good for travel
  - Save storage space
  - Easy to search
  - Can be altered/deleted remotely
  - Avoid with young children
  - Dangers:
    - *Endangered Minds* by Jane Healy
    - *Amusing Ourselves to Death* by Neil Postman
    - *The Shallows* by Nicholas Carr

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## Where should we buy books?

- Homeschool conventions
- Online – homeschool sites, eBay, Amazon, BN.com, addall.com, abebooks.com, powells.com
- Local brick & mortar stores
- Used-book stores
- Thrift stores
- Library sales
- Yard sales

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## Where should we keep books?

- Accessible vs. stored in boxes
- Baskets
- Bookcases in every room (except bathroom)

*"I would be most content if my children grew up to be the kind of people who think decorating consists mostly of building enough bookshelves."*

~Anna Quindlen, (1952– , American journalist and author)

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## Use bookcases as room dividers.



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## Where should we keep books?

- Letting go

*"I have heard people complain innumerable times that they have no space for books, therefore they cannot afford to buy another to read. I have always concluded that these people must not be totally serious about books."*

~ Marshall Brooks, *A Brief Illustrated History of the Bookshelf*

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## How should we organize books?

- History - chronological
- Biography - alphabetical by subject
- Science - by topic
- Literature - by author, genre, era
- Series - separate or integrated
- Nonfiction - by topic
- Children - keep special books in own room

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## How should we use books?

- Read aloud

*"I learned from the age of two or three that any room in our house, at any time of day, was there to read in, or to be read to. My mother read to me. She's read to me in the big bedroom in the mornings when we were in her rocker together, which ticked in rhythm as we rocked, as though we had a cricket accompanying the story. She'd read to me in the diningroom on winter afternoons in front of the coal fire, with our cuckoo clock ending the story with 'Cuckoo,' and at night when I'd got in my own bed. I must have given her no peace. Sometimes she read to me in the kitchen while she sat churning, and the churning sobbed along with any story. It was my ambition to have her read to me while I churned; once she granted my wish, but she read off my story before I brought her butter. She was an expressive reader. When she was reading 'Puss in Boots,' for instance, it was impossible not to know that she distrusted all cats."*

~ Eudora Welty, *One Writer's Beginnings* (1984), p. 5

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## How should we use books?

- Assigned reading
- Free reading
- Let's go look it up!
- Bait the coffee table.
- Seasonal or topical baskets
- Audiobooks
- Older children read to younger children.

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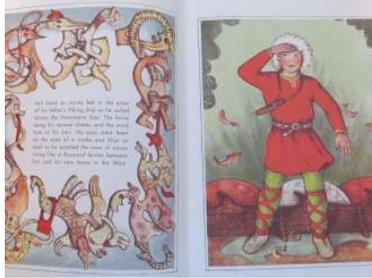
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## How should we use books?

- Persevere with late readers.



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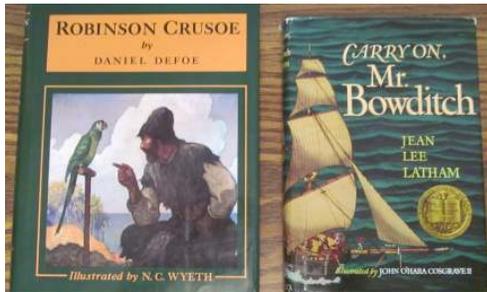
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## How should we use books?

- Persevere with reluctant readers.



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## How should we use books?

- Use narration instead of worksheets.
  - Tell me all you know about...
  - Explain how...
  - Describe our...
  - Tell me 5 things you learned about...
  - Tell back the story in your own words.
  - Draw a picture or map about what we read.
  - What did you learn about [character] in this chapter?

Narration starters from *The Charlotte Mason Companion*  
by Karen Andreola, p. 126

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## How should we use books?

- Teaching high school literature
  - Encourage interaction instead of lectures.
  - Focus on discussion.
  - Avoid “memorize and regurgitate.”
  - Encourage students to form opinions.
  - Require journaling.
  - Use creative assignments as well as essays.

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## How should we use books?

- Goal: *Think* about what you're reading.
- Keep a journal.
  - *“Thoughts tend to disentangle themselves when they flow over the tip of a pencil.”*
  - ~ Dawson Trotman, founder of the Navigators

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## How should we use books?

- **Write in your books!**
  - Underline, star, or bracket important passages.
  - Write captions or keywords at the tops of pages.
  - Argue with the author in the margin.
  - Create your own topical index in the front or back.
  - Create a character list for fiction.
  - Mark favorite quotes.
  - *How to Read a Book* by Adler & Van Doren
  - Use an index card as a bookmark in library books.

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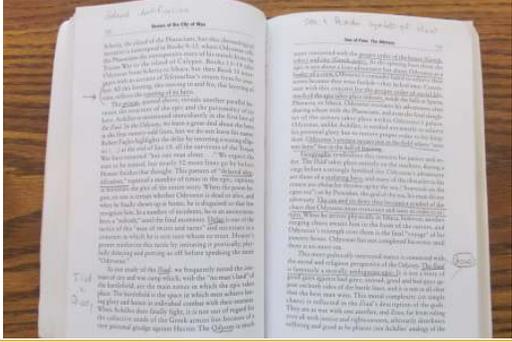
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## Write in your books.



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## How should we use books?

- Keep a reading record.
  - List author, title, date completed.
  - Keeping in a journal is warm and personal.
  - Keeping on computer makes it searchable.
  - Note date completed on title page of books.
  - Keep a reading record for children until they can keep it for themselves.

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## When can YOU read?

- YOU need to read—for the reasons already discussed.
- Your children need to see you reading to know that you value it.
- Make reading a priority. We make time for what matters to us.
- Audiobooks – while driving, exercising, doing household chores
- Family reading time (reading separate books individually as well as read-alouds together)
- Bedtime
- [www.HowDoYouDoltAll.com](http://www.HowDoYouDoltAll.com)

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