

The Advantages of a Good Book

Have you ever been so immersed in a book that time seems to fly by? This is an occurrence that I have been lucky enough to experience. I have spent most of my life reading, or being read to. It has impacted my life in a positive way that I think everyone should try. It is not unusual for people to not enjoy reading. In fact, in my experience throughout school, most of my classmates have not been too fond of it. I wish more people enjoyed reading because it has many benefits that can be applicable through all walks of life.

Reading novels can be an easy way to relax and escape reality. In today's world where the news is filled with terrible events, reading can be a great way to take your mind off such travesties. There was a period in high school when I stopped reading as much and started spending a lot more time on social media. During that time, I felt very anxious and let the outside world consume me. I did not take any breaks from constantly consuming media, and it was not good for my mental health. When I decided to start reading more again and to stop spending so much time on my phone I was a lot calmer and less stressed. Taking that time away from the news and the horrible events surrounding me was beneficial in ways that I could not imagine. It is important to keep up with current events, but it is important to also have a break occasionally, and reading fiction is a great, productive way to do that.

A sense of satisfaction and the feeling of being productive also come with reading books. In my opinion, there is nothing better than finishing a long novel. I had a friend in high school who did not like to read, and therefore never read any books unless she had to for class. She would tell me often how much she disliked constantly scrolling through social media apps, and that there seemed like there was no end to the constant stream of posts. While constantly scrolling through social media, she said that she never felt productive and felt like she was wasting time. Whenever I am reading, I feel productive because I am constantly closer to finishing the novel. There are not constant posts that never seem to end. Due to this, I get a

feeling of satisfaction when I finish reading a novel. An example of this is when I was in middle school and was reading the Harry Potter series. After reading Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince, which is close to 1000 pages, I felt very productive and was proud of myself. The same feeling often does not come from spending time on social media and technology.

Another reason reading novels is beneficial is because they can give you experiences you might not have had otherwise. They can transport you to different worlds and times and give you experiences that living in a small town might not. Going back in time is not physically possible, and therefore people will not be able to have those experiences, but they can be achieved through books. When I was in elementary school, I was obsessed with the Magic Tree House series. Even though I was young and could not physically go to all the places they went, I was still able to get an idea of what that certain time period was like. The characters in the book experienced events in the past, and therefore I was able to experience them too. A more recent example is when I read a book about a small family that lived in Italy. I have never been to Italy, but from the vivid descriptions in the book I was able to imagine myself there. I could picture the buildings and streets so well that it felt like I was actually walking down them. Despite having never been to Italy, I have an idea about what it is like, and I did not have to leave my house.

Making friends and spending time with family is another reason to read. When I was preschool age my grandmother used to read to me whenever I went over to her house. It was a great bonding experience for us. It can also be beneficial in other ways than bonding with family. Reading novels can also make you friends, even if it does not seem likely. I met my best friend in middle school through reading the same series of books. She saw me reading a book that looked familiar to her on the bus and came up to me to talk about it. We became instant friends because of our shared interest in these books. It was a great talking point and conversation starter. To this day, we are still really close friends, all because of one book.

One of the most common reasons I have heard about why people do not want to read fiction novels is because they do not have any real-life take away, and there is nothing to be learned from them. I wholeheartedly disagree. Reading fiction books may not teach facts, but there is still much that can be learned from them. One of the biggest takeaways from fiction novels is empathy, or putting yourself in someone else's shoes. When reading a fiction novel, I put myself in the place of the main character, therefore I see their experiences through their eyes. Being empathetic hits me harder in these situations because I am getting a firsthand look at what this character is experiencing. Even though novels do not contain facts, there is still much to be learned from them, and empathy is only a small part.

Overall, reading is a beneficial way to spend your free time. Reading a book that you love can be a very relaxing and self-gratifying experience. I would suggest that you try, at least once, to read a novel that you think you would enjoy. You might be surprised at the positive impact it will have on your life.