

# 10 Ways to Encourage Your High-Schooler to Read

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By Louise Baigelman

If your teen struggles with reading, getting her to sit down and actually do it can be challenging. But it doesn't have to be a battle. Use these strategies to encourage her to read more.

## 1. Keep things real.

Make explicit connections between your child's ability to read and her future options in life. If she's thinking about college or her career path, have open, honest discussions about the ways reading might be necessary for her success. Find role models who struggled with dyslexia, but persevered and came out on top. Just be careful to discuss, not preach. Encourage your child to brainstorm with you and to generate some of the ideas you discuss.

## 2. Let your teen choose.

The best way to encourage your child to read is to allow her to read whatever she finds engaging, whether it's comic books, cookbooks or romance novels about vampires or zombies. The books she's drawn to might not be your favorites, but don't discourage her preferences. Reading is reading. Avoid any urge to censor her choices.

## 3. Look for books at her reading level.

If your child struggles with reading in high school, it can be challenging to find high-interest books at her reading level. Look for books that specifically target reluctant teen readers such as those offered through Orca Book Publishers and Saddleback Educational Publishing. It's also a good idea to let your child use assistive technology that makes reading easier, such as audiobooks. Getting practice with an accessible text is better than giving up on a traditional book that is geared for more advanced readers.

## 4. Model reading for her.

The best way to create a culture of reading in your home is to read as much as possible. The more your child sees you reading, the more likely she is to follow suit. This doesn't change once your child enters high school. Teens are even more resistant to any message that implies do as I say, not as I do.

## 5. Discuss what she reads.

Talk in meaningful ways about what your child reads. Ask questions and encourage debate. Create an environment of deep discussion and critical thinking. Talking frequently about what she's reading can help in more ways than one. For example, if your child has dyslexia or ADHD, she may prefer talking about a story to reading it. Help her stay motivated by having her read short passages and then discussing them.

## **6. Resist the urge to criticize.**

If your teen is a reluctant reader, you want to prevent her from shutting down about reading altogether. And that means keeping negative opinions about what she reads to yourself. If you don't like the vampire stories she's into, don't voice that criticism to her. If you think eBooks are inferior to paperbacks, don't share that opinion while she's reading an eBook. Be tolerant and encourage her reading, whatever form that takes.

## **7. Find a compelling series.**

Readers who get hooked on the first book in a series can follow the same characters or themes through many more books. For teens with learning and attention issues, starting a new book can be daunting. But the familiarity of a series can make it easier to understand the text and can reduce the negative feelings associated with starting a new reading task. Find the right characters or themes, and even reluctant readers will be eager to pick up the next book in the series.

## **8. Connect reading to your teen's passion.**

By high school, your struggling reader may have lost her motivation to work on reading skills. But you can encourage her to stay engaged by looking for ways to connect reading to subjects that are relevant to her. For example, if your teen is a reluctant reader who wants to work with animals, make it clear how important reading will be to learn more about veterinary science.

## **9. Tie reading to social media.**

If your child likes texting friends and posting on social networks, you can give her mini-assignments that use those interests. For example, encourage her to start following a blog and to read interesting posts aloud to you occasionally. Or you could ask her to be on the lookout for interesting abbreviations people use in texts and get her to make a cheat sheet or to quiz you on what these abbreviations stand for.

## **10. Leverage her interest in current events.**

Highlight the ways that your high-schooler can use reading to keep tabs on what's happening in her world. Encourage your child to pick up a newspaper or subscribe to a magazine. For teens with learning and attention issues, reading might seem frustrating or boring. But if your child is interested in sports, politics, celebrities, music, you name it, there will always be something she might want to read!