Prof. A. C. Grayling, in a review of "A History of Reading by Alberto Manguel", had said, "To read is to fly: it is to soar to a point of vantage which gives a view over wide terrains of history, human variety, ideas, shared experience and the fruits of many inquiries." So true! Reading is really like taking a flight to great heights in pursuit of knowledge. It's a journey towards enlightenment.  
  
Even if you have read one good book in your life, you will know what reading gives. It gives you incomparable pleasure. Read one good book and you will know what the joys of reading are. Reading nourishes your mind. Reading gives you both information and knowledge (and teaches you to distinguish between the two). You eat to keep your body fit and working, right? Then reading is food for your mind and soul. Reading informs you of what's happening around, helps you remain updated about what's changing and not just that. Reading encourages you to think and imagine, think out-of-the-box and imagine the impossibles. It's through reading that you understand that knowledge knows no bounds and the hunger for it is insatiable.  
  
During the olden times, reading was limited to just books, only books. Today, we have the Internet housing so much information, hosted on thousands of websites. We have books online and e-book readers that make reading them easy. The web, our new storehouse of information, is just a click away. But this, in no way has stolen the magic of reading books, the sound of their pages fluttering, their smell... you can curl up with a book anywhere, anytime. But with an e-book reader or your laptop, some of that romanticism is lost. Be it through any medium, reading is important.  
  
The more we read the more informed we are. It's the means to upgrade ourselves constantly. Reading helps us keep abreast of the times.We learn to read and write at a pretty early age. Our first encounter with reading is probably when we are read out to, from story books... remember those bedtime stories? We begin learning the alphabet, the basic math, we read fun and fascinating facts about animals, plants and the universe. We ask 'whys' and 'hows'. In books, we find their answers. Textbooks accompany us all through education; starting from school right through higher studies. We learn to read, then read to learn, and keep reading to keep learning, to gain knowledge and remain with the world. It's only through reading that we gain exposure to information from different sources. The latest developments in technology, advancements in science, breakthroughs in different fields, the inventions, discoveries, product launches, movie reviews, celebrity gossip, changing political scenarios; just everything around us can become knowledge, only through reading.  
  
Reading paves the way to education and self-enlightenment.Given that reading is the means to gain knowledge, it's important to inculcate the habit of reading right from childhood. You know what role bedtime stories play in a child's life? Research says that reading something just before going to bed helps the child feel secure and more comfortable while sleeping. So, get children into this habit of reading, bring them good books and help them understand the joys books hold. This habit will go a long way, in making them better human beings. "To acquire the habit of reading is to construct for yourself a refuge from almost all the miseries of life." ~ W. Somerset Maugham  
  
Children who are introduced to reading at an early age are seen to have a better understanding of phonics. They acquire language skills with ease, have a richer vocabulary and possess greater cognitive abilities.Children who grow up reading good books definitely stand out. The way they think and act is way different from those who have never been exposed to reading. Reading not only adds to their general knowledge but also shapes their personalities. Reading has a great positive impact on one's life. Reading good books is important during the formative years of a child's development. It's during childhood and teenage years that reading inspiring stories can have a deep impact on a child's mind. During these years of a child's life, if books become his companions, he will develop the hobby of reading and grow up to be more versatile than he would have without reading. Teenage is the phase when one is easily influenced by whatever he is exposed to. If inspirational stories and life experiences are read during these years, they can change a person for better. They stay with him and keep encouraging him to achieve his goals and choose right against the wrong.  
  
Reading keeps us occupied. Reading leads to a fruitful use of time. It helps us get rid of worries. Yes, reading is a great stress buster. It diverts our mind from monotony. Books are excellent sources of recreation. Someone who loves to read can never get bored as reading a book is probably the best way to get rid of boredom. Books take you to an altogether different world, helping you relax and rejuvenate. "The habit of reading is the only enjoyment in which there is no alloy; it lasts when all other pleasures fade." ~ Anthony Trollope  
  
Reading helps develop creative and critical thinking skills. It develops vocabulary, sharpens language skills and leads to greater cognitive development. It leads to a better understanding of self.Books and the web are the richest sources of information. They cover a wide range of topics and store an enormous amount of information. Many websites dedicated to just information and innumerable books that flood libraries are testimony to the fact that knowledge is bountiful. Reading leads us only to read more in the never-ending pursuit of knowledge.  
  
The more you read, the more developed your cognitive abilities are. The more you read, the more creative and imaginative you become. Reading improves your grasping skills and sharpens your analyzing and problem-solving abilities. Reading gives you knowledge and makes you more confident. The more you read about others' lives and experiences, the higher the chances of you becoming a better decision-maker. The more you read, the better you get.  
  
Reading about the importance of reading should lead you to read more, and more, and more. So go grab a book you like and don't stop reading until you reach the end, and even after that. Read as much as you can. Reading is just so important.  
Read more at Buzzle: <http://www.buzzle.com/articles/why-is-reading-important.html>