***Why Is Reading Important?***

From time to time people have wondered why reading is important. There seems so many other things to do with one's time. Reading is important for a variety of reasons. We will look at some of those fundamental reasons below, but it is important to realize that struggling with vital reading skills in not a sign a low intelligence. For example, John Corcoran, who wrote[**The Teacher Who Couldn't Read**](http://clickserve.cc-dt.com/link/click?lid=41000000026789406), is a very intelligent man. He graduated from High School and College, became a popular High School teacher and later a successful business man all without being able to read. Many highly intelligent people have struggled with reading although, when properly taught, most people can learn to read easily and quickly.

Now, if a man like John Corcoran can succeed without reading, why is reading important? A person should really read Mr. Corcoran's story to get the feeling of shame, loneliness and fear that he experienced before he learned to read. He was able to succeed in spite of this major handicap because he was a man of intelligence, ability and determination. But, make no mistake, it was a handicap that made life harder and less enjoyable.

**Why Is Reading Important?**

1. Reading is fundamental to function in today's society. There are many adults who cannot read well enough to understand the instructions on a medicine bottle. That is a scary thought - especially for their children. Filling out applications becomes impossible without help. Reading road or warning signs is difficult. Even following a map becomes a chore. Day-to-day activities that many people take for granted become a source of frustration, anger and fear.

2. Reading is a vital skill in finding a good job. Many well-paying jobs require reading as a part of job performance. There are reports and memos which must be read and responded to. Poor reading skills increases the amount of time it takes to absorb and react in the workplace. A person is limited in what they can accomplish without good reading and comprehension skills.

3. Reading is important because it [**develops the mind**](http://www.learn-to-read-prince-george.com/retraining-the-brain.html). The mind is a muscle. It needs exercise. Understanding the written word is one way the mind grows in its ability. Teaching young children to read helps them develop their language skills. It also helps them learn to listen. Everybody wants to talk, but few can really listen. Lack of listening skills can result in major misunderstandings which can lead to job loss, marriage breakup, and other disasters - small and great. Reading helps children [and adults] focus on what someone else is communicating.

4. Why is reading important? It is how we [**discover new things**](http://www.learn-to-read-prince-george.com/joy-of-learning.html). Books, magazines and even the Internet are great learning tools which require the ability to read and understand what is read. A person who knows how to read can educate themselves in any area of life they are interested in. We live in an age where we overflow with information, but reading is the main way to take advantage of it.

5. [**Reading develops the imagination.**](http://www.learn-to-read-prince-george.com/thinking.html) TV and computer games have their place, but they are more like amusement. Amusement comes from two words "a" [non] and "muse" [think]. Amusement is non-thinking activities. With reading, a person can go anywhere in the world...or even out of it! They can be a king, or an adventurer, or a princess, or... The possibilities are endless. Non-readers never experience these joys to the same extent.

6. In line with the above, reading develops the creative side of people. When reading to children, stop every once in awhile and ask them what they think is going to happen next. Get them thinking about the story. When it is finished, ask if they could think of a better ending or anything that would have improved it. If they really liked the story, encourage them to illustrate it with their own drawings or to make up a different story with the same characters. Get the creative juices flowing!

7. Reading is fundamental in developing a good self image. Nonreaders or poor readers often have low opinions of themselves and their abilities. Many times they feel as if the world is against them. They feel isolated [everybody else can read - which isn't true] and behavior problems can surface. They can perform poorly in other subjects because they cannot read and understand the material and so tend to "give up."

8. Why is reading important? Let's keep going... Good reading skills, especially in a [**phonics reading program**](http://www.learn-to-read-prince-george.com/phonics.html), improve spelling. As students learn to sound out letters and words, spelling comes easier. Also, reading helps to expand the vocabulary. Reading new words puts them in their mind for later use. Seeing how words are used in different contexts can give a better understanding of the word usage and definitions than the cold facts of a dictionary.

9. There is an old saying, "The pen is mightier than the sword." Ideas written down have changed the destiny of men and nations for better or worse. The flow of ideas cannot be stopped. We need to read and research to build on the good ideas and expose the bad ideas before they bring destruction. Only by reading can we be armed in this never-ending, life-and-death struggle.

10. The fact of the power of written ideas communicated through reading is a foundational reason why some governments oppose free and honest communication. Illiterate people are easier to control and manipulate. They cannot do their own research and thinking. They must rely on what they are told and how their emotions are swayed. There is a good possibility that this is one of the main reasons phonics was removed from the schools about 100 years ago.

11. Finally, why is reading important? [**Reading is important**](http://www.learn-to-read-prince-george.com/importance-of-reading.html) because words - spoken and written - are the building blocks of life. You are, right now, the result of words that you have heard or read AND believed about yourself. What you become in the future will depend on the words you believe about yourself now. People, families, relationships, and even nations are built from words. Think about it.