**Does reading really make a person smarter?**

Much has already been said about the impact of reading on a person’s intellect. One’s success is significantly determined by his ability to read effectively. In fact, many of the world’s most eminent intellectuals are certified bibliophiles. With all these, we are led to ask– **Does reading really make a person smarter? How so exactly?**

All of us know the importance of a good workout to stay fit. The same thing is true with our brain. A study conducted in Stanford University proves that reading is the workout the brain needs in order to stay in its optimal health. To conduct this study, a group of people were asked to read Mansfield’s Park by Jane Austen while being monitored by a Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) machine. The MRI mapping showed that the minute they started reading, there was a noticeable rise in the level of blood flowing to the brain. Not only this, blood was also flowing to those parts of the brain, which were currently not in use.

Reading does significantly expand your vocabulary in ways that you may not notice right away. It exposes you to and lets you uncover the context of the words that you’ve probably never heard of before. Reading compels you to look up the meaning of the words you’ve just read. It also improves your communication skills. This goes hand in hand with vocabulary: the more you read, the more words you have available in your frame of reference to use in everyday conversations. Reading teaches you new words and new ways to use the words more correctly when constructing sentences in your mind. Moreover, it gives you a context with which to view other cultures, thus consequently making you more intelligent, tolerant, and capable of embracing human differences.

Reading develops your analytical skills, too. A research conducted by Dr. Anne E. Cunningham, professor of psychology in the University of Berkeley in California, shows that readers are seen to have a greater general knowledge and are able to spot patterns a lot quicker. The more patterns you spot, the more developed your analytical skills become.

Reading is an effective memory booster. Reading and memory are two interrelated concepts. When you read, you are training your brain to retain the ideas and words you are reading, which eventually helps boost your memory. Effective reading does demand a lot of focus. No person can possibly comprehend what he’s reading if he’s not paying attention to it at all. Thus, reading is one of the proven ways to hone a person’s ability to concentrate.

How Does Literature Boost Your Brain Power? Scientists and psychologists at the Liverpool University performed an experiment to determine the brain activity of subjects reading the works of literary icons Wordsworth, Shakespeare, and Eliot. The subjects were then asked to read modern translations of the texts as they had their brain activity examined again. The conclusion? The more difficult the text got, the more their brains fired up. Serious literature does act like a brain rocket booster. Sorry, reading 50 Shades of Grey will not make you any smarter.

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