



How to be a Great Reader!

We know you love to read (why else would you be on our site?), which probably means you're a good reader already...maybe even great! However, we can always improve our enjoyment of a great book.

We hope these tips from various reading experts are helpful in growing your reading skills!

"Do not read, as children do, to amuse yourself, or like the ambitious, for the purpose of instruction. No, read in order to live." — Gustave Flaubert

Below is some great advice from some of the most passionate reading experts:

Quit reading. I identify as a reader, and as part of that identity, I'd developed the habit of finishing every book I read, because a "real" reader finishes books. I know I wasn't alone. I've now adopted the habit of putting down a book as soon as I lose interest. What a relief. When I let myself abandon a boring book, I have more time to read what I love. As Thoreau observed, "Read the best books first, or you may not have a chance to read them at all."

[Gretchen Rubin](#), author of *Better Than Before: Mastering the Habits of Our Everyday Lives* as shared in [Publishers Weekly](#).

Read More Socially. Reading may be a solitary endeavor, but once we're done with a book, most of us want to do the same thing: talk to other people about what we loved, what we hated, what we didn't understand. There are many ways to do that:

- Join an online book club.
- Find your author on social media.

Tina Jordan, At Home in Croton-on-Hudson, N.Y. as shared in the [New York Times](#).

Build a Ritual Around Reading. To develop any kind of skill, including reading, you need consistent, deliberate practice. You must create conditions for yourself that encourage you to read with regularity. Make reading a habit.

One way to do that is by building a ritual around it. To create one for yourself takes experimentation. Do you enjoy waking up early and getting things done before work? If so, then you should try to read in the morning. Or, do you prefer some evening entertainment before calling it a day? If yes, then try reading before you go to bed.

[Jon Santiago](#) in [The Post Up](#).

Give the Author the Benefit of the Doubt. One habit of a good reader is being willing to take an author on his own terms. When we read a book, we should give the author the benefit of the doubt, rather than reading only with the intent of critiquing all we dislike about the book, the author, or the ideas presented.

That is not to say books cannot be criticized, but it should only come after we give it a fair hearing. I think Solomon's words from Proverbs 18:13 are helpful here: "If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame."

[Brian Phillips](#), Host of The Commons podcast, author of the CiRCE literature guides

Keep a List of Great Books. I regularly read about other books that sound interesting. This invariably leads to a "I'd love to read that book, but I have to read this book first" moment. The next time this happens, consider recording the name of the interesting books in Airtable, a Google Doc or notepad.

This invariably leads to a "I'd love to read that book, but I have to read this book first" moment. When you are stuck for something to read in several weeks or months, you can consult your rapidly growing list and pick something interesting.

Bryan Collins, [8 Crucial Strategies For Becoming a Better Reader](#)

Pursue 'Targeted Serendipity'. Pick each new book at random, and you'll end up with plenty of duds. But if you stick religiously to the same authors or genres, or rely on Amazon's recommendation engine, which makes suggestions based on past purchases, you'll never expand your horizons. Choose a middle path: use a recommendation site such as Whichbook, which filters books based on numerous sliding scales – "funny/serious", "optimistic/bleak", "no sex/lots of sex" – without knowing which specific titles you've previously read.

[Oliver Burkeman](#), *The Guardian*

Make the Conscious, Intentional Decision to Read Something Deeply. The first step is setting the intention to devote your brainpower and attention to whatever you're reading (for whatever length of time you choose). You don't actually need a lot of time to read in an engaged way, but you do need to deliberately make the decision to do so.

That means turn off your phone or put it away, tune out the other distractions, and just focus on your book or whatever you're reading.

Sarah DiGiulio, [Better by Today](#)

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