



Parkside Middle School Strategies to Get Teenagers Reading

Practical ideas to help lure your children back to books.

- **Model reading.** Read at home where your child can see you. You are an important role model to your children. Talk about what you're reading and express your enjoyment. Try to be seen as often as possible reading a book. Send your child the message that reading is a pleasure, not a chore. You could even share books you have read and create a book group.
- **Look at Young Adult fiction.** YA (young adult) novels tackle the edgy issues teenagers struggle with, from peer pressure and romantic longing to grief and trouble at home or school. Whether they're personally grappling with these issues or seeking to understand the world around them, teenagers gravitate toward subject matter that's relatable. Check the YA bestseller lists for ideas.
- **Merge movies with books.** Hollywood is turning to YA fiction for ideas more than ever. Offer your child the print version to read before or after a big film adaptation comes out, and talk about the similarities and differences between the two.
- **Get graphic.** Gone are the days when graphic novels were dismissed as comic books. Now recognised as literature, they may be the key to getting some teenagers hooked on books. They're available in a wide range of genres - from adventure and fantasy to historical fiction, memoir, and biography - so there's definitely a graphic novel out there to suit your child's taste.
- **Lure them in with adult books.** As well as thinking about fiction titles, find nonfiction titles on subjects your child is curious about, such as climate change, race, political corruption, or true crime. Check adult nonfiction bestseller lists to see what's popular. The website www.commonensemedia.org is a good place to start when trying to work out whether an adult book is appropriate for your child or not.
- **Try poetry.** Novels in verse are a popular trend. All that white space on the page makes them easy to read, and the spare, lyrical approach can really pack a punch.
- **Let them listen.** Spark teenagers' interest by getting an audio book to listen to on the way to school or on long drives. Let them download audiobooks to their smartphones.
- **Keep reading material around.** Children who grow up with lots of books around tend to read more. Stock the bathroom, car, dining table with all kinds of different text types. There's nothing wrong with "micro-reading."
- **Give the gift of reading.** We all like to be treated. Consider handing your child a gift card to your local bookstore. They'll discover the treasure-hunt fun of looking for a good book.