



## How to Pick a Great Book

Reading is a good way to discover the next big thing and to learn a little more about yourself while you're at it. But while you may know how to find the best app for your phone, do you know how to pick a book you'll really like? Here are some tips.

### Start With Your Interests

Reading on your own isn't like reading for school. You can pick something that's all about your interests, whether it's ancient martial arts, computers, or fashion design. You name it, there are bound to be books about it.

### What's Your "Type"?

Do you prefer fiction or nonfiction (or both)?

**Fiction** books like novels or short-story collections can transport you to another world or help you imagine something beyond your own experience. Not all fiction is the same — maybe you like the classics, fantasy or sci-fi, mystery novels, or ghost stories. Maybe historical fiction is more your thing. Try a range of types of fiction and see what you prefer.

**Nonfiction** books give you the who, what, when, and why of something. They tell stories using facts —but that doesn't mean they're dull. Nonfiction books can bring to life the eruption of Mount St. Helens in Washington or help you see inside a Chinese dynasty. Many of them read like novels from start to finish.

### Read the "Blurbs"

The reviews and quotes on the back and inside covers of many books are called "blurbs." They give you an idea of what the book is about, but can also help you pick future books. If you find a book you really like, take a minute to read the quotes (if there are any) and see which authors praised the book. Often, they'll have similar styles and you might find you like books by those authors too.

Do you have an ereader? You can download free samples (usually the first chapter) of ebooks that look interesting before you buy or borrow one.

### Find a Family Favorite

What was your mother's favorite book when she was your age or your dad's? How about a sibling's? Find out and give it a read — then you can share your thoughts about the book. After all, what better way to connect with that cousin you only see in the summer than trading reading recommendations and discussing your reactions?

## Ask an Expert

Your local library can hook you up with a whole lot of great book ideas. Explain your interests — rock stars, sports teams, historical events, humor, whatever you're into — and any writers you like, and your librarian can point you toward books that you'll love.

Finally, you'll probably enjoy what you're reading a lot more if you find a quiet place and make time for the book. We all multitask, but most reading is best enjoyed when you can concentrate and focus on it. You can put on some good music (ideally without lyrics), get yourself something to drink and a comfy spot, and let yourself be carried away by the book. You'll see that time does fly when you're reading something you love!

## Book Talk Tips

**Prepare for a book talk while you read** by taking notes and placing sticky notes at cliff-hangers, quotes, scenes that surprise you, and parts that you connect with.

**Think about craft:** What does the author do to keep you engaged? Like any good presentation, **don't memorize it** but do have your major points in mind.

**Practice, practice, practice!** Talk to someone you know at home about your book using any notes you have taken. Your love for the book will shine through!

**Go to this site to see examples of great book talks and more helpful tips. You will find it very helpful.**

<https://millikin.libguides.com/childrens-literature/booktalks>

The 6th-8th grade math teachers would like each student to work on the online math program ALEKS. We suggest 5-10 topics per week throughout the summer. Any time you complete a knowledge check, you can count it for 5 topics.

Returning students: You are familiar with the program. Depending on your math level, you should be reviewing skills that you struggle with, or trying to work toward a higher skill level.

New students: ALEKS is an online math program that we use throughout the school year. The summer is a perfect time to familiarize yourself with the program, review skills that you may need a refresher on, or start working toward a higher level of math. Information including your username and password will be emailed before June 1. To access ALEKS [please click here](#).

Please reach out to Mrs. Walker ([amy.walker@sfxphx.org](mailto:amy.walker@sfxphx.org)) or Mrs. Amrhein ([cynthia.amrhein@sfxphx.org](mailto:cynthia.amrhein@sfxphx.org)) if you have any questions!

--