How to Help Your Student Enjoy Reading and Beat Summer Reading Loss

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Children and teens who take a vacation from reading, and particularly those who are already reading below their grade level, are at risk of **summer reading loss**.

**Research on reading** tells us that many students lose as much as three months’ worth of reading skills over the summer. When the new school year begins, students who have lost ground in reading will need time, instruction, and practice to regain pre-summer reading competence. Over time, this deficit can result in a reading level of two or more years below actual grade level.

**Improved reading competence** supports growth in vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, background knowledge, grammar sense, spelling, writing, and, importantly, stamina, confidence, and enjoyment. To increase your child’s chances of **gaining**, rather than losing, reading skills over the summer, consider these tips for keeping them reading:

- **Children and teens need ready access to high-interest reading material:**
  - Give gifts of books and magazine subscriptions that match your student’s interests: *Happy Summer!*
  - Leave surprise-filled, pop-up book baskets in places where kids least expect them: car, bathroom, patio, bedroom, grandparents’ house.
  - For long drives and vacations, stock up on audio- and e-books.
  - Hunt for reading material related to your vacations and day trips:
    - Going camping? Take turns telling stories around the campfire.
    - Off to the aquarium? Do some research to enrich your experience.
    - Cruising to Alaska? Dig into the impact of global warming on wildlife.

- **Visit the library together:**
  - Librarians are experts at matching young people (including reluctant readers) with books, and they are happy to help.
  - Find out how to search databases for books that your child might enjoy.
  - Teach your child how to order and renew books online, including books from further-afield libraries.
  - Most libraries have summer-reading programs that kids and young adults can participate in at their own pace.

- **Print-rich environments promote reading for the whole family:**
  - Model reading for enjoyment, practical activities (cooking), and work at home. Show your children that you value and enjoy reading.
  - Promote sibling reading: Ask your older student to help choose a picture or early chapter book to read to a younger child. Research shows that older readers benefit as much or more than younger children.
  - Read aloud to children of all ages – who doesn’t like to hear a good story?
  - Encourage readers to keep track of, write about, and illustrate their reading in a small notebook or journal.
**Enrich your student’s reading experience by sharing it:**

- Talk to your children about what they (and you) are reading.
- Encourage them to explore favorite and new genres and topics with you, both fiction and nonfiction.
  - Check out graphic books at your local library. Many reluctant readers gravitate to these individual books and series.

**Keep students reading all summer:**

- Encourage your child to complete required AMSA reading in the first half of the summer. Get an extra copy from the library for yourself, and read along so you can talk about the books.
- For challenging texts, find an audio book – but make sure that your child is following along in the book.
- Then talk about what else your student would enjoy reading this summer – and what you plan to read next.
- Check out the sites below for recommended books and magazines for all ages.

Help your student beat summer reading loss, increase reading competence, and forge a strong identity as a reader by making high-interest reading a key part of your family’s summer.

*Recommended Book and Magazine Lists*: These websites include fiction and nonfiction award-winning and recommended titles for readers of all ages and levels.

1. [www.ala.org](http://www.ala.org) – The American Library Association website: Click at the top of the site on *Awards, Grants & Scholarships*, and then on *ALA Recommended “Best of” Lists*, followed by *Book, Print, & Media Awards*, where you can view individual awards for the year’s (and previous years’) best reads. Check out: *John Newbery Award*, *Coretta Scott King Awards*, *Pura Belpre Award*, and *Michael L. Printz Award*; and also scroll through to find a variety of recommended lists.
2. [www.literacyworldwide.org](http://www.literacyworldwide.org) – The International Literacy Association website: At the top, click on *Get Resources* and then *Choices Reading Lists* to find children’s, young adults’, and teachers’ top book choices.
3. [www.slj.com](http://www.slj.com) – The School Library Journal website: Search *magazines for middle and high school*. Scroll down for online and snail-mail magazine recommendations for teens. This site also provides book recommendations for teens.