



Windows of Opportunity: The Rewards of **Enlightened Literature Choices**

"The older I grow, the more thankful I feel to my parents in providing for us, in the home in which we were reared, good things to read. We had a library in that home with more than a thousand volumes. . . I do not wish to convey the idea that as children we read extensively in our father's books. But they provided an environment. We saw our father and mother read, and they read to us. It did something of an indefinable nature. It gave us a familiarity with good books. We felt at home and at ease with them. They were not strangers to us. They were as friends, willing to give to us if we were willing to make a little effort."

-Gordon B. Hinckley



The Thirty-Minute Solution



*In **thirty minutes** or less you can significantly impact the amount of **good literature** in your home!*

- 🕒 **Read Aloud** - Begin today to read aloud to each of your children (even teenagers) regularly. Read at naptime or at bedtime, wrap up in blankets on the couch on Sunday afternoons, or read by firelight on cold evenings. **Nothing you do will impact your children's love of literature as much as reading aloud.**
- 🕒 **Library** - Get each family member a library card. Set aside a specific time for visiting the library at least monthly (put this on your calendar). Use a resource list (examples below) so you can select some titles before you go. This makes a great Family Night.
- 🕒 **Reading Kits** - Make each child a reading kit that contains the three B's:¹
 - A *Book* (a book of her own, with her name written in it)
 - A *Book Basket* (or magazine rack) placed where it will be used often
 - A *Bed Lamp* to make it possible for your child to read in bed
- 🕒 **Magazine Subscriptions** - Order a subscription to a magazine you know your teenager will read (the *New Era* and the *Reader's Digest* are great examples), and leave it where it will be noticed.
- 🕒 **Subscribe to a Newspaper.** Share one interesting current event at the dinner table daily.
- 🕒 **Birthday Gift** - Make it a family tradition that each child gets at least one age-appropriate book for each birthday (a great gift idea for grandparents).

¹ From Jim Trelease. *The Read Aloud Handbook*. New York, Penguin Books, 43.

FIVE TO TRY:

Five great websites that promote good literature



Reading Rainbow - The PBS production “**Reading Rainbow**” provides an alphabetical list of all of the books featured on the show. Each is accompanied by a short description telling what the book is about (with a quicktime plugin so non-readers can hear about and choose their own books).

<http://pbskids.org/readingrainbow/books/>



No time to read aloud tonight? Visit <http://www.bookpals.net/storyline/> to let your preschooler **hear a story read aloud** by a member of the Screen Actors Guild. The site includes activities inspired by each book. For a list of books recommended by grade level, click on the “Bookfinder” link at the top of the web page.

(Or visit <http://www.bookpals.net/cgi-bin/bookfinder/index.pl?page=booklists>)



Have you ever tried **Reader’s Theater** for Family Home Evening? Aaron Shephard has adapted retellings of favorite folktales and fables into reader’s theater scripts. Costumes and props are optional, but a fun bonus! Once your kids get the hang of it, you can help them adapt some of their favorite books or scripture stories. (See *Teaching, No Greater Call* p. 177). <http://www.aaronshep.com/rt/RTE.html>



“Hearing a **poem every day**, especially well-written, contemporary poems that students do not have to analyze, might convince students that poetry can be an understandable, painless and even eye-opening part of their everyday experience,” writes former Poet Laureate of the United States, Billy Collins. He has created a site for every teenager whose experience with poetry has been limited to literature classes where “all they want to do is tie the poem to a chair with rope and torture a confession out of it.”

<http://www.loc.gov/poetry/180/>



If you’ve ever been disillusioned by the content of “award-winning” adolescent literature, you may find help from CommonSenseMedia’s **literature rating guide**.

<http://www.commonsensemedia.org/reviews/index.php?showthis=Book>

Some additional suggestions:



Visit <http://www.storyplace.org> which contains dozens of animated stories, activities and reading lists about everything from gorillas to bath time.



Try BYU’s Children’s Book and Play Review website, located at cbpr.lib.byu.edu/index.html. Download a list of “100 Picture Books Everyone Should Know” as a possible shopping list for your home library.



Visit <http://www.bookpals.net> to view lists of recommended books categorized by grade level (Pre-K through 6th grade). Click on “bookfinder.”



<http://www.bookhive.org> lists book reviews by genre, so your mystery lover, or your sports fanatic can find a book they will love.



<http://www.icdlbooks.org> contains digital images of children's books from all over the world.



<http://www.ipl.org/kidspace/browse/rzn0000> A list of links to some of the best book and literature sites on the internet