

2022年



4.23 World Book Day 創作比賽  
Creative Competition in 2022

書香滿溢 · 喜閱  
Surrounded by the Scent of Books • Joy of Reading in 60 Years



香港 Hong Kong

高中組 中四 (S4) ▶ 中六 (S6)  
Senior Secondary

Eeman

Po Leung Kuk Vicwood K.T. Chong  
Sixth Form College

Topic The Magic of Reading Books

The scent of books is the aroma of wisdom and education.

If I could describe reading in two words, I would say it's "a journey". Just sitting down and opening a book begins that "journey". One day I am in the world of Harry Potter, a fantasy story and the next, I am experiencing what life is like in a war through someone's diary. A good book that you enjoy reading can make you feel physically present at a place but mentally be lost within the pages of a book. Reading books is magical for me because each book has provided me with a new and different experience. By flipping through books, we get to relate to characters, live life through their perspective and even learn valuable lessons.

A famous quote I would like to share by George R.R. Martin

"A reader lives a thousand lives before he dies, said Jojen. The man who never reads lives only one." This sentence perfectly describes how I view reading.

From the early age of 5, I began my journey of reading. Obviously, I started by reading children's story books like every other child. My first book was a classic toddler story about a caterpillar who becomes a beautiful butterfly when he grows up. After reading for a while, I realized reading is so much more fun when you are genuinely interested in what you are reading about. Ever since I found that out, I found myself in the sea of all types of books, searching what suits me best and what will inspire me to become the best version of myself because as Oscar Wilde said "You are what you read".

Everyone has their own reasons for why they read or why they do not. Bookshops, parks, airports, cafes or even while on a bus, reading can be done anywhere and anytime. Reading is a hobby which can be done by people regardless of age, gender, nationality. There are no rules on who can read or what can be read. We are in a society where we are circled by all kinds of books. Hundreds and thousands of books are published every year. As long as you are willing to enter "this journey", there is definitely a whole new world waiting for you. There are many types of genres and books that you wouldn't even know of. There are fan fictions, there are novels and there are comic books, also known as manga. To become a book lover, it doesn't necessarily mean you have to finish a difficult thousand-page literature, you can also call yourself a dedicated reader even if you read fanfics, manga or webnovels. There is something for everyone as long as they try to find what's perfect for them.

Last year when Covid-19 cases were at its highest, we didn't have to go to school. In the middle of quarantine, I got extremely depressed and stressed because I was stuck at home for so many days. One of the things that cheered me up when I was having problems was reading books. From many of the books I have seen, I would like to share a favorite book of mine I read during the pandemic called "Little Women". It was published in 1868, a book written a century and a half ago. It is a semi-autobiography written by Louisa May Alcott as the characters are inspired by real people around her. Little Women is a touching, coming-of-age story about family love, loss, poverty and struggle set in the mid-nineteenth-century in New England. The story follows the lives of the four March sisters, Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy and details their passage from childhood to womanhood. The masterpiece written by Louisa May shows how life was like 150 years ago and what problems women had to suffer back then. The book is still a bestseller even after centuries.

The book was a life changer and provided me with many valuable lessons. Here are some of my favorite quotes from the book and what I learned from them.

"Have regular hours for work and play; make each day both useful and pleasant, and prove that you understand the worth of time by employing it well" - Louisa May Alcott. This quote taught me to keep a healthy balance in life and also that both work and play are just as important as each other. We never know how much time we have here in this world, so we have to make the best out of each and every moment we are given. We should live our lives to the fullest.

"Be worthy love, and love will come" — Louisa May Alcott. This quote taught me that if you do not love yourself, how can you love someone else, meaning that we should learn to love and respect ourselves more before starting to love others.

"The humblest tasks get beautified if loving hands do them." — Louisa May Alcott. This sentence taught me that kindness is the greatest value in life. It explains that even the most normal tasks become beautiful if they are done by kindness. So be kind. Growing up surrounded by the scents of books has made me want to write my own book. I hope I will be capable enough one day to write my own book to inspire people the same way I have been inspired by others. But before that, I want to read tens of thousands of books to bring up my imaginations. My goal for the coming year is to explore many kinds of genres and books and become the best version of myself. I hope I can change the world even a little with all that I have and will learn.

If you want to try reading books, you should explore your options. Go to a public library and borrow books. Don't give up if a book doesn't interest you. Go and pick up another one. The world is surrounded with all types of books and you will definitely find your favourite "scent".

Comments

- Well written with deep reflection.

KAI Lok Tin

Shung Tak Catholic English College

Topic Reading is Always a Good Idea

Perhaps to many people, reading becomes a chore when teachers require students to finish a lot of book reports under immense time pressures. What they would do is to skim the text as quickly as possible and finish the piece of homework without applying much effort. To be frank, I used to be like this. But that is not the case anymore because I finally realised why reading is always a good idea.

My journey of reading started pretty early. Like what many of my classmates did, I used to read only after mandatory book reports were given. But then as I followed the advice from my teacher, I found reading to be highly enjoyable and thought-provoking. When I read with a clear purpose, such as dealing with homework, I will never find reading interesting. That was the 'ding' moment for me. After that, I tried to fully immerse myself in the fictional world created by the writer.

I could feel the joy of reading after reading Matilda by Roald Dahl. It is a children's book that narrates the story of the five-year-old protagonist Matilda who is a child prodigy. She reads classics for adults effortlessly and shows strong learning abilities as well as her hidden superpower. Ironically, her parents neglect her and think studying is useless. Even though Matilda's class teacher, Ms. Honey, spots her talent, her parents are so ignorant that they refuse any form of extra education. Another storyline is about the confrontation between the sadistic headmistress and the kids. I almost laughed my head off while Matilda made the chalk float in mid-air and threatened the headmistress to ensure she did not mistreat Ms. Honey anymore. Childish as the story seems, I thoroughly enjoyed the book because I finally did not have to look words up in the dictionary but was able to fully immerse myself in the simple yet interesting plot. No extra mental energy was needed to think from another person's perspective. Reading becomes a great source of entertainment if we can digest the story easily. Not only can we comprehend the ideas of the writer, but also predict what comes next. For instance, when Matilda's father is caught selling broken cars and decides to go to Spain and never return to Britain anymore, Matilda is facing the dilemma — to leave or not to leave? The pause allowed me to think about the two possible scenarios. But to my surprise, Matilda chooses to stay behind with Ms. Honey and her parents agreed! The eagerness to know how the plot develops drove me to finish the book in one go. We can all experience the excitement reading brings to us.

Reading also helps us to be more empathetic. The book The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time tells the story of Christopher Boone who is autistic and extraordinarily gifted in maths and science. The book is expressed from the point of view of Christopher, which enabled me to have a better understanding of the life of an autistic person. At the beginning of the story, Christopher is alleged to have killed his neighbour, Mrs. Shears' dog, Wellington, owing to his agitated response to the policeman's questions. Such actions appear to be peculiar to us. Yet, if we try to explore the inner life of Christopher, immediately, we will know that he dislikes people speaking to him too quickly simply because he is obsessed with every minute detail surrounding him. He must process his surroundings, causing his mind to freeze up. Another example is that he finds understanding everyday life difficult. He simply does not know that his father and Mrs. Shears are having a romantic relationship, despite knowing that Mrs. Shears often visits his house and cooks dinner for them. This story might be a more explicit example illustrating how reading helps us to empathise. But the same in fact applies to every book we read. In order to follow a plot and learn the rationale of each act, we have to first put ourselves into the shoes of the writer or the characters. This skill is known as 'theory of mind'. As we further hone our skills, we can read people's emotions more accurately and naturally empathise with others' experiences. That enables us to build stronger bonds by responding to others more appropriately and avoiding unwanted conflicts. Therefore, it is undeniably a good idea to start reading.

When it comes to books that are more factual, these books provide a holistic view on some issues. Too Much Information by Cass R. Sunstein is a case in point. The book discusses a host of questions, such as, "How much information is too much?" and "Do we need to know the calorie content of the food we eat?". Before reading this book, I believed that having as much information as possible will always do good to our lives. Little did I know that this could easily cause information overload and decision fatigue. My initial notion totally changed after reading this book. I will never regard always having floods of information to be good anymore. I found reading this type of book especially rewarding as I can grasp the knowledge and experience of authors within hours. In fact, we can learn from the mistakes most people make and constantly remind ourselves not to do the same in the future. Our lives can be better if we make better decisions.

In a nutshell, I find reading to be especially useful and actually rewarding. Not only can it help us acquire knowledge, but it also helps us to understand ourselves better and live a better life. Even though reading every day can be tough, there is always time for us to do so as long as we are determined to develop a healthy habit. Whether it be on the train, after a meal, or during bedtime, reading is always our best companion that truly enriches our lives.

Comments

- Some good viewpoints to the topic.

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Surrounded by the Scent of Books • Joy of Reading in 60 Years

60

## 香港 Hong Kong

## 高中組 中四 (S4) ▶ 中六 (S6) Senior Secondary

### LIU Sum Yau

#### United Christian College (Kowloon East)

##### Topic Reading is Omnipotent

"There's a time and place for everything" I bet you could imagine adults using this phrase against untimely frolic. But then, there are always exceptions — What time and place do you think is best for reading? In my point of view, reading is the best choice anytime anywhere, always giving us timely entertainment, comfort or advice; hence, the conclusion of its omnipotence. How do I know? Well, I have experienced reading's superpower firsthand. To illustrate, let's have a look at how reading is always the best choice for me in the last summer.

My week started terribly. Monday was the last day of school, but the gossiping among girls was still an unrelenting fire. By accident, it came to light that my best friend Kate has actually been firing contemptuous opinions on me behind my back over the year. Feeling sad and angry when I returned home, also overwhelmed with holiday boredom, I started reading the classic *Little Women*. It ended up as an amazing counsellor. Not only did the character Marmee's tender words — the most memorable quote "Be comforted, dear soul! There is always light behind the clouds," — suit my situation, but the four sisters' growth also inspired me to have a positive mindset in dismay. In the course of the story, they each landed into conundrums and difficulties, but always tried hard to learn from them and outgrow the problems and sorrow. It propelled me to rethink what insensitive actions I might have done that caused Kate's dislike, and to invent ways to mend our relationship instead of weeping over the event.

Besides sadness, there are a plethora of reads to choose from amid millions of emotions. When I am stressed, adventure stories such as *The Land of Stories*, *Narnia*, or *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* are an escape, carrying me to trips far away from all sorts of demanding tasks; while when bored, the mysteries in *The Book Jumper* intrigue me to no end; and when joyful, the satisfaction of reading whatever book — the sense of accomplishment, or the inner exclamation "Aha!" when you finish a book — maximizes the feeling.

Next, reading is also beneficial for our intelligence. Farther into the summer, I made up my mind that I shouldn't let my brain muscles go into a coma without school. Hence, I read a lot of books. On one hand, reading fills me with knowledge, while poring over *National Geographic's* factual reads like *That's Deadly* and the *Weird But True* series, I must say that I have gained a diverse range of knowledge from wacky bits of scientific facts to the dark history of the ancient world. On the other hand, science proves that reading keeps our minds active, inducing a lesser mind deterioration as we age. Also, it boosts memory and brain connectivity— way to go for straight-As! Plus, the vocabulary and sentence patterns do help with your language ability. Thus, reading is a good choice when you want a cerebral workout.

Yet, is the workout only for our heads? The answer is no, as reading makes us physically strong too. For one thing, thick and weighty books can be used as dumbbells during workouts. In this summer, I used Chinese novelist Jin Yong's books to gain more arm and back muscle. Not to get me wrong though, they are great reads too; and my favorites are *The Eagle-shooting Heroes* and *The Giant Eagle and Its Companion*, since colorful characterization and strong linkage are present throughout the whole plot which is superbly engaging. Aside from this side use, the magazine *Reader's Digest* has taught me how to eat healthier, sleep well, and spot signals of some diseases. Another benign way reading helps our physicality may sound odder, but for young adult fiction (YA) lovers — we often look up to virtuous characters. I adored Thomas and Minho from James Dashner's *The Maze Runner* series. In the series, these boys are significantly speedy runners; hence, they could escape from dangerous situations. With them being my heroes, I gain the motivation to brush up my stamina and tone up my muscles. Thus, we can see that no matter being a tool, instruction, or an influence, reading is a brilliant choice for leading a healthful lifestyle.

Not only is reading advantageous to our personal life, but it also opens our eyes to the world. Now, what should we do to learn about the globe? Read, of course! Considering historical events, *Les Misérables* by Victor Hugo painted the social state of France and told of the stories regarding the French revolution. It made me understand the solemn history of the French country, underneath the romantic mask of modern Paris. Nowadays, while news and radio merely offer concise reports about social happenings, their descriptions are often overly limited so that there can be no complete view of the issue, oftentimes causing a biased opinion on various cases. And that, again, brings us back to reading. Since books and magazines most of the time favor in-depth accounts of social occurrences, we can have a broader insight about them. For example, I have read *Politics in Minutes* across that tedious summer. Before reading the book, I used to be clueless about elections, social events and different ideas; and believed what everyone else said about the subject. Now, I understand how politics work and am able to discern whether other people are declaring facts or merely stating opinions. Thus, it can be concluded that reading is beneficial for us to be wise and multi-perspective socially.

In a nutshell, reflecting on this summer experience, I believe we can all see that reading is apt for all aspects of our lives — emotional, intellectual, physical health, and social awareness. That gives us reasons to believe that reading is the best idea at all times. What's more, there are loads of magazines and books that I have suggested in this essay. To the core of my heart, I seriously recommend you, my readers, to read them. They are all extremely marvellous, and I'm sure there must be at least one on the list that you will take a liking to. Now, hurry off and find one of those in the library to read!

#### Comments

- Lots of good examples to explain why reading is a worthwhile activity.

### MUI Suet Ying

#### Shung Tak Catholic English College

##### Topic Find Peace, Happiness and Wisdom in Books

As a keen reader, I found that reading has already become an immensely important part of my life. Benefited by books, I would like to express my feeling about the benefits of reading and explain whether 'Reading is Always a Good Idea' with my personal experience.

Undoubtedly, reading can sharpen our skills in areas of interest. Books are perfect self-learning materials. A kaleidoscope of knowledge of various fields is enveloped in books. There we can find information regarding astronomy, biology, history and psychology, to name but a few. Some knowledge can even be barely accessed in normal daily life, so many people are blocked from learning things that they are interested in. Several years ago, I became interested in gardening. Gardening, as we all know, is rather minor but I did find some detailed information in books such as *Best for Indoor Plants: The Complete Houseplant Survival Manual* and *Best for Vertical Gardening: Vertical Gardening*. Absorbing the sowing and planting techniques written in the books, I successfully master my planting skills and planted several vegetables and flowers like cucumbers, tomatoes and *Mimosa pudica*. Without the book, I could hardly learn planting techniques in normal life.

Besides practical knowledge, reading also enriches us with a sea of vocabulary items and sentence patterns, leading us to an improvement in writing. In the novel *The Black Cat*, I learnt different expressions of the same meaning. To illustrate, for expression of evilness, we may describe the actions of characters ('I took a small knife from the pocket, grabbed the poor cat's throat, and intentionally plucked out its eyes) or the vital environments (The ghostly wailing in the dark and gloomy cellar is already shocking people. What is even more frightening is the scene after the police open the brick wall where the wife is buried: The body is rotten and bloodstained everywhere). In addition, many synonyms appear between the lines. I was impressed by the language and I am glad to grasp the usage of those words.

Written by different professionals in different aspects and experienced authors, some books inspire new ideas. This benefit is intensified when philosophy books and fictions are read. In philosophy books, many ethics-related questions are raised, guiding readers to find their values and think about what is right and what is wrong. Having new views and thinking logically might be possible advantages. For fictions, they mostly act as sources of creativity. When we are reading novels, there are always new and creative plots enshrined in the story. We may be inspired and brand new ideas may be triggered.

*Sixth Sense* is a good example. In this book, the main character is dead but he thinks he is still alive. After reading this book, I start to think how afterlife is like and whether human beings still have memories after death. These kinds of ideas may never be popped up if I do not read. Therein the main point, reading is always a good idea.

Given that books are enshrined with a wide range of knowledge, reading can broaden our horizons. Sometimes travelling is not affordable or inaccessible to some people, especially those who are underprivileged. In this case, books act as tour guides to lead people to tour around the world. There are many kinds of travelling books nowadays. I have read the book *Journeys of a Lifetime, Second Edition: 500 of the World's Greatest Trips* and it gives me a big picture of the marvellous and fascinating places around the world that I have never heard of. Through reading, we can have a glimpse of the corners of the beautiful and mysterious planet that we are living in.

Undeniably, reading makes us smarter. As mentioned above, reading brings us to a wider scope of thinking. On top of that, reading can also strengthen our analytical skills and speed up our thinking speed. More often than not, novels contain foreshadows. Readers need to find the dispersed clues and combine them to deduce the plot. The book *Sherlock Holmes* is a perfect example. *Sherlock Holmes* contains many clues in each case. By weaving the tiny clues such as the background, accent of the suspect and the habits of the criminal, a conclusion can be made to solve the puzzle. During this process, analytical skills are trained. Other than that, the thinking speed is also boosted. The more we read, the faster the thinking speed. Biologically, reading more creates more connections between neurones (the basic unit of the brain which is responsible for thinking). When we are reading, we will naturally connect things we have learnt with the new ideas and knowledge written in the book. Reading is, therefore, good for us and we should always read.

From my own experience, I found that reading does not only help our external development but also our internal development and that is the reason for us to read often. Reading is a way of relaxation and a way to eliminate all negative feelings. When you flip over the pages in quiet places, an ambience of quietness and peacefulness is created and it has a magic power to ease your sadness. To me, when I feel upset, I would read Chinese poems. Ancient Chinese poems are so intriguing that I am deeply attracted by the ambience created by the poets. For instance, the strength and power of surging river water is successfully created in the poem *Remembrance of the Tale of the Crimson Cliff* written by Su Shi. The strong comparison between the vast universe (river water) and small human beings make me understand that we are just dust in the world and we should not be upset by trivial things. We find peace and happiness in books and this is the reason why reading is always a good idea.

#### Comments

- Rich examples which make your viewpoints convincing.

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WONG Yeuk Lam

Shung Tak Catholic English College

Topic Reading : A Journey of Treasure Hunt

When it comes to reading, my mind is always flooded with fond memories, ranging from reading picture books with my parents in the years of my childhood to reading novels by myself lately. Sometimes, it brings us laughters; sometimes, it brings us tears. However, no matter what reading brings us, we can never deny that reading adds colours to our lives and we can always gain something from it. "Reading is always a good idea".

We cannot deny that reading makes us smarter. "Reading is the way out of ignorance, and the road to achievement" Ben Carson, a well-known American author, once said that books are our educators. Books like encyclopaedias contain tons of knowledge inside. When we read, we get new insights on a wide variety of aspects from astronomy to health and disease, from anthropology to history.

I still vividly remember how my enthusiasm towards becoming an astronaut one day was aroused: when I was still a kindergarten kid, I went to the library with my mother. I randomly picked a book to read and coincidentally it was about astronomy. I was too young to really understand the book but with the help of my mother, I eventually knew that we can "fly" freely in space — that made me thrilled since I had never thought this possible. That first book already successfully captured me and I had an unquenchable craving for new knowledge in respect of the mechanisms behind being able to float in space, the clothing for astronauts, and the mystery of the solar system. With that first step, I had become a tiny expert of astronomy and was thrilled to share the insights on this topic with my friends and even teachers in school. Obviously, reading had boosted my intelligence as it allows us to understand things deeper and in a wider-perspective.

Another contributing factor making reading a good idea is that some books may inflict different feelings when it is read under various situations, such as different ages. "The Little Prince" is one of the prime examples. Around a decade ago, I read this book. How I thought of the story after reading was that the plot was fascinating and amusing, simply because even a rose could speak. Nevertheless, when I revisited this book recently, I had totally different feelings. I guess in some ways, interpretation changed with age. Now I saw the story in the eyes of the relationship between the rose and the little Prince. It was similar to a parent-child relationship — the little Prince was the parent whereas the rose was the child. No matter how wayward or bossy the rose was, the little Prince still spared no effort in taking good care of it and satisfied its needs. The story made me think of the unconditional love and support from my parents. Reading is intriguing, dynamic and ever changing.

What is even more enticing is that reading enhances our examination skills. Every time we read, we are likely to come across words or phrases that we don't know. In this case, we may expand our vocabulary bank by looking them up in the dictionary and saving them all in our bank. Besides that, we can be more familiar with an assortment of rhetoric, like similes, metaphors, personifications and hyperboles, etc. All these can be utilised on writing to help us upgrade our writing techniques and develop a unique style of writing. Also, reading helps speed up one's reading pace. As a student, we are always required to compete against the time during reading examinations. We have to read very fast in a bid to accomplish the paper within the time limit. Thus, reading can be a means of speed-reading practice. For instance, we can equip ourselves with skimming and scanning skills through daily reading habits. Surely, after several practices of speed-reading, reading papers will by no means be an uphill battle anymore.

Last but not least, reading is not only restricted to books, but news as well. It goes without saying that reading news broadens our horizons. In this era, we are surrounded by tons of news once we hold our phones in hands. This is absolutely a Godsend to everyone of us as we are able to build stronger connections to the world, without being affected by geographical restrictions or time constraints. We can get up-to-date news from all around the globe in any time throughout a day. For example, we can receive instant information about earthquakes take place in Japan just several minutes ago even though we are staying over a thousand miles away from Japan. What is more, we can understand some social or even global issues more comprehensively because news reported by different parties may show slightly different opinions. Thus, we can see the whole picture of an issue through reading and comparing the news reports released by different news media. By doing so, we can strengthen our critical thinking skills, and at the same time being more capable of analysing an array of affairs taking place beside us. Gradually, reading news makes us understand what is going on with different parts of the world and avoid being ignorant.

In a nutshell, reading is never simply a time-killer nor a boredom-killer, but it is instead a life-painter. It enriches our lives with joyful memories, and teaches us great knowledge, as well as equipping us with a whole basket of capabilities to be a better person. Therefore, reading is always a good idea is by no means fake. If you still do not have a reading habit, try to build up one. Surely, you will find the treasures between words or lines one day.

評判的話

- Inspired audience to love reading.
- I agree with you that "reading is not only restricted to books".

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作品以獲獎者姓名排序。  
Works arranged in the order of the winner's names.