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## The History Of Reading

By Sophia Hayes

In terms of evolution reading is a relatively new skill, something that is not innate, but has to be

learned. As writing can differ between cultures, so then is how we actually read. Compare for example, our alphabetic scripts against the logographic picture style of the Chinese. Written scripts have undergone many changes over the centuries, and written text has evolved into today's format progressing through several different alphabets, but still only taking a mere 500 years to reach its present form. So where did it all start?

Tracing back thru time, we can find basic evidence around the 4th millennium BC where marks were made on clay tablets. Archaeologists argue the prehistory of books began near Babylon, and that the art of writing was probably invented for commercial reasons. For example, recording how many oxen one owns etc. These tablets are among the oldest examples of writing known, and just by looking at these, and trying to guess their meaning, reflects the preservation of a thought that occurred long after they were written. Writing was recognized as a powerful skill and scribes rose swiftly through the ranks of Mesopotamian society. Although reading was seen as important, it did not get as much notice as the ability to record the data. As the scribes knew, and society was to find, the written word depended on the ability to restore it, that is, to read it. By the 2nd millennium BC, Mesopotamian script changed from pictographic to cuneiform writing (wedge shaped signs representing sounds instead of objects), and by around 2000BC the first true alphabetic system (where a phoneme is represented by a letter) appeared. Although perhaps a Greek development, the Egyptian alphabetic system shows some elements of such representations. All European languages are derived from the Greek alphabet.

Before the advent of printing, scribes laboriously provided the production of text. Knowing Latin well enough to read and speak it regardless of the vernacular one spoke marked an individual as literate, and literacy tended to be limited to those of privileged birth.

By the 15th century, Gutenberg invented the first printing press in Germany in 1440. Printing removed the need for scribes to reproduce texts and made reading material more available in the languages of the people. By the mid 16th century school systems were starting to expand, and the term literate became more of a descriptor to dichotomize the population into those who could read and write in the local dialects. In the 17th century, 50% of all titles printed in Europe were religious works.

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As urbanization and industrialization spread, children began to be removed from the workforce, making them available for education. However, free sponsored education was not instituted until 1870. Reading however, took a big leap during the 19th century when cheap books appeared for the masses.

By the end of the 19th century the term literate began to refer to measures of certain skills of reading and writing. Although it would be nice to have 'universal literacy' unfortunately this is not the case, depending on how you define literacy itself.

For the full article and more, please visit the web site.

With a PhD in Psychology and specializing in reading related issues, Sophia Hayes is developing a series of articles to be hosted on

<http://www.discoverymile.com>

. The above is an abridged version of

the first article.

### **Help Your Children to Love Reading**

**By Tracy Catarius**

It is so important to create an environment that promotes the love of reading. Not only is reading necessary for survival in today's world, it is educational, it sparks imagination, it is a stress reliever, provides entertainment and enjoyment, the list goes on.

Here are some ideas to help you help your child love reading.

The most important thing a parent can do to teach a child to love reading is for the parent to let the children see how much you love reading. You need to set the example.

Set aside a time each day when everyone in the family reads. Perhaps it is for half an hour after school or before bed every day. Be consistent.

Read to your children. Even after they are old enough to read themselves, it is still a treat to have a parent read to them.

Never punish your child by taking away books.

Share books you loved growing up.

Create a tradition of reading one chapter from a book each night before bed. I remember a teacher in the fifth grade would read a chapter each day from "Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of Nimh" by Zena

## The History Of Reading

Bernstein (Illustrator) and Robert C. O'Brien (Author). I looked forward to class every day so I could find out what happened next!

Start a family book club. Everyone reads the same book and pick a night to discuss it. I suggest checking out copies from the library, I wouldn't want to buy several copies of the same book. Or you can take turns reading from the same book.

Every child should have a reading nook in his or her bedroom. A simple beanbag chair or other cozy chair, a small table with a reading lamp and a small bookcase are all that is needed. If space is especially limited, just a comfy chair and reading lamp will suffice.

Creating a calming, relaxing space in your child's room is also important. There should be no television or video games in the bedroom. The room should also be neat and not have a lot of stuff. Studies show simplicity and neatness are calming where a lot of stuff or messiness can clutter the mind.

If your children are small, perhaps the reading nook should be either in a common room or the parent and child should each have a chair in the child's room.

Let your child choose his or her own books. Don't limit the reading material (within reason) they choose. If s/he wants to read educational books, comic books or music magazines, let him/her. The

goal is to let your child love reading.

If all your child wants to read is magazines or other reading material you consider not great, then perhaps you can find something your child is very interested in and find books on that subject. If your son is only interested in reading music magazines, perhaps you can buy books such as a biography on one of his favorite musicians, books on musical history, books that teach how to play music, etc.

I hope you find some useful ideas. Remember, the family that reads together, stays together. Have fun!

Tracy Catarius is the owner of Greatest Kid's books, a site devoted to children's education and Mattmama's, a resource site for parents. You can visit these sites here:

<http://www.greatestkidsbooks.com>

and

<http://www.mattmamas.com>

. She lives in Massachusetts with

her husband and is the mother of one son and one daughter. She also has a personal family library of approximately 1,000 books on various subjects.

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Help Your Children to Love Reading

The Importance of Teaching Children to Love Reading

The Importance Of Reading In Home Schooling

How Reading Makes A Child Smart

Credit For Young People: Establishing A Credit History

Your Own Bible Research Library

101 tips to stay fit and live longer.

How to Use Your Mind for Study

Disaster Preparedness and Crime Protection Manual

How To Get Reprint Rights Without Paying A Dime



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