



Reading to Write

What is the Theory of "Reading to Write"?

"Reading to write" is the theory that the best readers make the best writers. Actually, it's not just a theory; it's simply a fact that the best way to be a good writer is to read a lot. Reading to write means developing long-term habits of reading good material and allowing good writers to shape and influence our own writing style.

Why read to be a better writer?

Like any skill, writing is best learned by studying its masters.

Walk with the wise

In order to be the best writers we can be, we must study those who have mastered the art of writing. "He who walks with the wise grows wise [...]"—Proverbs 13:20 (NIV). If we walk with the wise writers by reading their books, our own wisdom will increase as a result. Their skill effects us through "osmosis:" if we immerse ourselves in good writers, some of their talent will just seep into us.

Learning eloquence

Reading teaches us to write with more eloquence. We especially learn eloquence by immersing ourselves in the words of those whose writing is superior to the everyday writing of most people. Reading works that are more interesting and more beautiful help us to write more interestingly and beautifully ourselves.

Building vocabulary

Reading increases our vocabulary. One of the best ways to learn new words is to see them used in the context of a good piece of writing. The context will be a useful example that is helpful in learning the word's meaning.

Recognizing good writing

As a result of reading good books, we learn what good writing consists of. We can then recognize poor writing when we see it because we know what the real thing—good writing—looks like. Then, not only are we better equipped to judge what is written in the newspaper or elsewhere, but we become better equipped to recognize when our own writing is in need of improvement.

Being learned and informed

In this era of technology, reading is still the most effective way to know what's going on in the world. But this isn't just for keeping up with the news; becoming well informed in just about anything requires reading at least one or two good books. And don't forget your other sources; whatever you want to write about, you can probably find information on the internet that is useful for researching your topic and for having the best understanding of it you possibly can.

Sharpen your thinking skills

Reading good writing will help us to no end in learning to think. Critical thinking skills are improved by following written arguments, evaluating them, and responding to them in writing.

Improve your grammar!

Reading good writing will also help us greatly in learning how to use good grammar. Just by being exposed to good grammar, we can learn how to use it ourselves. The more we become familiar with good grammar through reading, the more likely it will become part of our own knowledge.

What should I be reading to become a better writer?

- ✍ It's very important to read the right things: good books, respected newspapers, and quality magazines. The more you read, the more it will help you to become a better writer.
- ✍ Be sure to read things you're interested in. It won't do you much good to read things you could care less about. Your interest won't hold; you'll run out of motivation to keep reading.
- ✍ What sorts of things do you want to write? Read things written on the same topics. This will help you learn the vocabulary specific to a subject, as well as the writing styles. You'll also become familiar with major contributors and authors of a topic.

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