



Five Tips to Encourage Reluctant Readers

By Bianca Smith • April 12, 2018



You badger, you cajole, you consider bribes, but you just can't get them to read. No matter what you do, they'll avoid it. You have a reluctant reader.

However, all is not lost. Some reluctant readers grow into voracious readers. And we know that reading helps your adult life, **including increasing your income**. But how do you encourage reluctant readers? We have some tips for you.

Don't Force It

As much as you want your child/younger sibling/best friend/partner to love reading as much as you do, forcing them won't change anything. It may even make them rebel against reading. Be aware that they may never become an avid reader. If that's the case, find other ways to share stories. It could be movie and television adaptations.

Find Books They Enjoy

This sounds a lot harder than it actually is. Yes, you can buy every book in sight and see if they read it, but that gets expensive fast. Instead, plan a trip to the library and let them wander around. If getting to the library is difficult, borrow books and leave them in the home. If they don't like action, try something with animals next time.

Read Aloud with Them

Many children (and adults) find the act of reading difficult. Listening to the stories gives the love of adventure and storytelling, without the stress of understanding the letters. It may be the stepping stone to reading, but even if it's not, they'll discover the stories and isn't that the most important thing?

Set an Example

If you're reading this blog, then we assume you don't need this reminder. You probably read around reluctant readers all the time. But at the least, adults shouldn't say that reading is impossibly hard or boring in front of the reluctant reader. Anything new is hard, and we want them to see the effort is worth the reward.

Try Graphic Novels

Comic books have grown up since the days of Richie Rich and Archie. It's not uncommon for popular books to be re-released in **Graphic Novel** format. They may not have the deep language beauty of the classics, but isn't it better to read in some format rather than none at all? Some Graphic Novels are action stories and violent, so check for age and behavioral appropriateness. Here are some recommended for children, but you know your kid and can make that judgment call.

Recommended books for reluctant readers

- **Goth Girl** by Chris Riddell
- **Horrid Henry Robs the Bank** by Francesca Simon
- **The Recruit** by Robert Muchamore
- **Dork Diaries** by Rachel Renee Russell
- **Ruby the Red Fairy** by Daisy Meadows
- **Diary of a Wimpy Kid** by Jeff Kinney
- **Fantastic Mr. Fox** by Roald Dahl
- **Captain Underpants and the Terrifying Return of Tippy Tinkletrousers** by Dav Pilkey
- **Believe It or Not, My Brother Has a Monster!** by Kenn Nesbitt
- **Diary of a Spider** by Doreen Cronin

And to finish, here's a recommended **reading list** from the Young Adult Library Services Association for older readers.

[Read more by Bianca Smith](#)

Books mentioned in this article

Francesca Simon

HORRID HENRY Robs the Bank

Horrid Henry Robs the Bank
Francesca Simon
from: **\$4.19**

Rainbow Magic

Ruby the Red Fairy

Ruby the Red Fairy
Daisy Meadows
from: **\$3.59**

Roald Dahl

FANTASTIC MR. FOX

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from: **\$3.59**

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- William Shelton · 4 years ago

My mother, who was a gifted story teller, would entice her children to read by relating the opening act of a gripping tale. Then, when her audience was truly captive, she would produce a copy of the book and say that if we want to know how the story ends, we will just have to read it for ourselves. Thus I was introduced to Daphne Du Maurier, Margaret Mitchell, H.P. Lovecraft, and Michael McDowell.

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- Beth Price-Almeida · William Shelton · 4 months ago

Awesome! I'm starting this with my son today! Thank you for sharing! I have a 7 yo son who, for reasons beyond me, can read like nobody's business he's 2 grade levels above his 2nd grade... But does not like to read at all. I hope this will help. ♥

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- Beth Clark · William Shelton · 4 years ago

I love it. Wise woman, your mother. My kids are readers, but I wish I'd thought to do this when they were little!

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- Kathy Fraser · 4 months ago

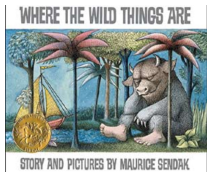
It was the absolute joy of my life to share a love of reading with very young children in my K-2 classroom for 15 years. I'm now a special education teacher at a middle and high school, where I'll be teaching English this fall to students who are not only reluctant but repulsed by books! I'm encouraged by the recent graphic novel adaptations of several classics (like 1984, Animal Farm, the Outsiders & the Giver) and plan to read aloud to them just as I did to my younger kids. Anyone have experience to share that might spark interest with a generation whose reading/writing is largely limited to social media posts?

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