



Hong Kong Public Libraries

2020 4.23 World Book Day Creative Competition Winning Entry


Reading in Retrospect

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It is an undisputed fact that reading is an essential part of one's life. Being taught to read is one of the first things we encounter when it comes to education, yet its value and specialty are often understated. For many, it is but an inescapable skill that you must learn in order to survive. However, how else could we effectively learn about the things out of our direct grasp and vision? Reading truly is a powerful ability that is unique to us, and therein lies the beauty of it all; comprehension of the world itself and all its intricacies through nothing but a man-made system, developed over millennia.

Certainly, I too have learnt much through reading. As an individual who is profoundly interested in the world, there is genuinely no greater means to learn. I would attribute the emergence of my enthusiasm for learning to the National Geographic Almanacs, specifically the 2010 edition as that is the version I owned and adored as a child. Providing vast amounts of facts on just about everything, it doesn't just satiate curiosity; it further cultivates it into a desire to seek even more information. Learning small bits of trivia may not have much pragmatic value, but their fun appeal goes a long way in driving the love for learning.


Naturally, an affinity for reading would mean an attraction to studies as well, wouldn't it? That is true, to a certain extent. Yet, I cannot say with a straight face that I actually study arduously like some friends I know that do. My reading is purely driven by curiosity, so the degree of impact on academics is dependent on the subject and topic. What I can say though, is that my desire to learn lets me know significantly more than what would be taught in school normally. This allows me to converse with more diversity and depth than I would have if I had not partaken in as much reading. As a result, since I adore science, my performance in Physics in particular is boosted due to my enthusiasm for it.



Whenever I pay a visit to a library or a bookstore, the science section is where I always flock to in order to see what there is to learn and study up on. You can always expect a healthy abundance of books there that provide such knowledge, although I must admit they can sometimes even be a bit too technical, or esoteric for me to fully follow. In spite of that, I always try to trudge on ahead in an attempt to comprehend the material nonetheless.

Fortunately, there are some fun and easy-to-read science books that anyone can enjoy, regardless of literacy. The Manga Guides series are very charming, especially for those who find appeal in Japanese animation and manga aesthetics like I do. The volume that I had the pleasure of reading is the Manga Guide to Relativity, which as its namesake implies, teaches the concepts of special and general relativity. It is a topic that most do not ever encounter till university, therefore it could appear as an intimidating and untouchable topic at first. However, the way that it is presented breaks the preconception in a rather ingenious manner: a relatable scenario is established, and characters learn about the topic through relatively casual dialogue. In other words, it moves along just like any manga you would read purely for fun, just that the exposition now teaches real-world phenomena. Despite the casual and unpretentious presentation, they still can explain facts in impressive detail, even providing mathematical proofs to back them up. It is an excellent way of introducing and decoding otherwise daunting subjects.

A contributor to this hobby of mine that cannot be ignored is the internet itself. The possibilities are endless, and all topics there are in the world to read about are available right at your fingertips. Countless articles can be found for reading, most of which I can assure you wouldn't see going about your daily lives. Many people focus on the ill-effects of using the internet, but I personally have experienced benefits that far outweigh any drawbacks. What you reap from the internet depends on how you use it though, and improper usage may not yield very productive results.



All this may sound as if reading is a serious and scholarly endeavour, requiring much toiling and dedication. That however, is simply not the case! It can be a very enjoyable experience even for those who aren't looking to study or learn. Fictional stories, such as in the form of young adult novels are absolutely viable choices for entertainment, not being of any lesser value compared to movies or TV shows. I remember being deeply engrossed in the Maze Runner series of novels after my friend lent the first volume to me; I read it whenever I had free time, chatting with him about it just like I would with any other form of entertainment. It's important to note that this was before I even considered reading fictional novels as something I would really partake in for recreational purposes. Following this, I acquired a larger interest in reading novels, and sought to read more to assuage the desire.

It is fun to entertain the idea of how different I could have turned out if I hadn't made reading such a big part of my lifestyle. One thing is certain though, I wouldn't be able to write this right now even if I wanted to! It has made an unimaginably positive impact on my life, and I hope that I can accommodate more time for it in the future. After all, there are still infinitely many things I could read up more on!

Comments from the Adjudication Panel

Messages conveyed in the essay reach the heart of the readers. Clear and precise arguments. Ideas are original. Good organization skills.