

Yearning. Believing. Achieving.

YBA English Teachers' Newsletter

Cheshvan 5776

Motivating Reading

*"To learn to read is to light a fire;
every syllable that is spelled out is a spark."* Victor Hugo

Editor's Note

One of the most difficult aspects of making Aliya was giving up the local library and having steady access to free books in English. Choosing one book on the monthly order form we received in elementary school from Scholastic was a life lesson in self-control which I still need to exercise today whenever I walk into a book-store or go online shopping,

Unfortunately, reading native tongue/L1 books for pleasure is declining ([Statistics of Reading for Pleasure](#)) and reading in L2 is an even more formidable task for EFL students. So, how do we impart the message to our students that reading books in English is the key to learning vocabulary and language skills and opens doors to new worlds? *Let's consider ideas to make the idea of picking up books more appealing.*

"Site-Seeing": Useful Sites for Teachers and Students

Useful Sites to Access Books: Low Cost/Audio Books/E-Books



Where does one find books our students can read?

- Steimatzky and ספרים צומת often have sales and discounts for those with membership. I personally purchase books on-line through [The Book Depository](#) which has good prices and no costs for shipping.
- Another ideal solution for anyone, but especially LD students, is doing book reports with the help of **audio books**. Some are only recorded and others, often accessible on YouTube, have the accompanying text.

Search YouTube with the key-words "audio books with text". Legally, in order for a book to be free, it must be part of the public domain. We do not encourage piracy.

[Click [this link](#) for multiple free audio books or this [example](#) for weaker, younger students - **Peter Rabbit and more.**]

Sometimes, it's worth investing money to access books within seconds, such as having an Amazon Kindle account. By subscribing to sites that send daily updates, you get notifications about free or discounted books. Using Kindle Cloud, one can download e-books to a Kindle device, or read the books on the computer or on one's cellphone. [[www.amazon.com](#)] For example, last month they posted this new, free e-book with audio available on YouTube - [a new parody for Harry Potter fans](#) about an American student in Hogwarts during Harry Potter's second year. The [free ebook](#) is for Amazon users.

Other e-books for a fee: **Barnes and Noble's Nook or Kobo.**

Key words for searching: **ebooks**

<http://www.hongkiat.com/blog/20-best-websites-to-download-free-e-books/>

Promoting Progress In and Out of the Classroom

Reading Contest

חמ"ד has proposed a Read-A-Thon: Students/classes are encouraged to read the maximum number of books and a

parent or teacher signs for every book they read. The dates suggested fall on Chodesh Irgun. I'd like to propose a Read-A-Thon for December - January/Kislev-Tevet. By making attractive prizes for individuals and classes (assuming we focus on junior high), we'll be able to promote reading. **Offer students 15 minutes of fame on YBA's website and Facebook.** Have students make posters advertising the books (or any creative task) and send in pictures to post - who doesn't want a "Like"? A class prize could be a "Movie Marathon" or "English Master Chef", which reinforces English in a positive environment.

Food for Thought

Issue: Which books do you encourage your students to read?

This past summer, as well as reading whatever book I could get my hands on, I also caught up on many books that my students repeatedly choose for book tasks. A few years ago, too many vampires named "Edward" appeared on my radar to ignore so I read the **Twilight** series. Over the past few years, I've read **The Maze Runner**, the first of **The Hunger Games** trilogy, and **Wonder** to remain up-to-date. Last year, **The Fault in Our Stars** by John Green was a favourite among my high-school students, so I read the book and watched the movie (Tip: You can catch who only watched the movie by asking students for Isaac's hair colour.) What can I tell you? The book has a heart wrenching story about cancer, a topic close to the hearts of students who know someone with cancer or volunteer with cancer patients; the writing is full of teenage cynicism - I enjoyed the author's tongue and cheek wit, and it's a love story. Is it a book I'd feel comfortable buying and putting in an Ulpana school library? No. The language and young adult physical relationships are an issue. **How do you choose?**

Recycled Book Reports

One of the dubious experiences of a teacher is coming across a "recycled" book report. Some students are genuinely shocked when they get caught. Among the excuses: "But I changed a few words." "I didn't have time." "I can't do it." "Only 90% is copied from the internet. The other 10% I did

myself." Some students who generally have difficulties suddenly submit a doctoral thesis. There are sites to check authenticity, but usually, it takes only a sentence or two to figure it out.

The best solution is dedicating time to silent reading weekly and doing the book reports in class. This, too, is in the תמיד letter to English teachers. In an ideal schedule, it would be doable. Realistically, it's not always feasible. Another solution is asking the parents to sign the work and verify it was done at home without assistance. That doesn't guarantee unassisted work, but it shares the responsibility with the parents. Parental involvement is critical in conveying the message to youth that reading English is essential.

Offer students 15 minutes of fame on YBA's website and Facebook

Gimmicks and Games

Shtick that Sticks

Each of us has a trick to help make some lessons stick. Since present simple is never simple for some students, here are two ideas:

1. Stand at the front of the class with the stance and tone of a teen with an attitude problem. Put the following rhyme up for the students to follow as you say it as a bored teen would (play up on the "ok" at the end):

"I, You, We, and They;

Don't change a thing, ok?" [Or "Don't add a thing, ok?"]

Have students come up and do their best imitations of the recitation. From then on, anytime it comes up again, assume the pose - or start off the rhyme - it usually triggers the rest. It also helps panicking students on tests and is useful to teach which pronouns go with "don't".

2. A second song is a fabulous cheer for present simple that students remember for years. It includes positive and negative, regular verbs and "be":

"We love you, _____, Oh yes we do,

We don't love anyone as much as you,

When you're not with us - we're blue

Oh, _____, we love you." Here is [the tune](#), sung

to honour the Beatles in 1964.

We Want to Hear From You

The aim of the E-YBA (English-YBA) mailing list and these newsletters is to share knowledge and personal experience. The more input from you, the more we'll all gain.

This month's question: How do you solve the problem of getting students to read books knowing that many books classified as "young adult" have content that doesn't adhere to our schools' ideology?

Please write on the forum
and share your thoughts:
e-yba@googlegroups.com

Not part of the group yet?
Have a topic that you think should be covered?
Write to english@yba.org.il to join.

YBA sends its heartfelt condolences to the families of victims of the recent attacks, including Hila Armoni, a Hebrew literature teacher in Ulpanat Bnei Akiva Hashomron in Elkana, for the loss of her daughter **Naama Henkin** and son-in-law, **R. Eitam Henkin**, and wishes a speedy recovery to the wounded.

וּמָחָה ה' דִּמְעָה יַעֲלֶה כָּל פָּנִים
(ישעיהו כה)